Re: Fwd: Fwd: You've got mail!

SPAM

Reader's Digest

APRIL 2012

₹75

BOOK SECTION

THE *TITANIC* 100 YEARS ON

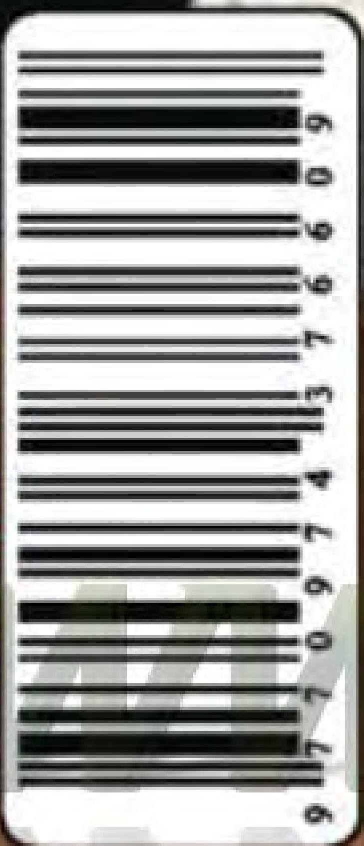
WHAT MAKES GOOGLE CLICK

SHARPEN YOUR MENTAL FOCUS

Beauty *by* Design

Curse or cure? Do you really need cosmetic surgery?

FOR SALE IN INDIA AND NEPAL ONLY



THE INDIA TODAY GROUP

From the Editor

Patient Courage



Why are there so many jokes on cosmetic surgery and hardly any on cancer or heart operations? Take the one about the lady to whom God promised another 40 years to live. But soon after, she gets run over as she walks out of hospital after major cosmetic surgery. It seems even God couldn't recognize her.

Our cover story—for which Digest Feature Writer Snigdha Hasan interviewed surgeons, psychiatrists and "patients"—has a message. Cosmetic surgery is a fast-growing business (sorry, I hate to call any doctor's work a business!). The procedures are much safer and wider-ranging today than they were 20 years ago. But you don't need to look like a movie star to be happy. The reason many people want surgery to fix a perfectly good nose or jawline may be psychological—which counselling, rather that the scalpel, could solve. As our article says, "It takes a certain courage to choose not to modify your appearance." I might add: So that God recognizes you the way you were created.

Google Inc gave Digest correspondent Robert Kiener an unprecedented four days of access to the company and its employees at its 26-acre California headquarters, known as the Googleplex. As one of Google's public relations officers explained to Kiener, "No one we asked refused an interview with Reader's Digest. Many of them had grown up with the Digest and some of our expat employees had even learnt English by reading it." See Kiener's story on page 92.

This month, a hundred years after the *Titanic* went down, we reprint a forever fascinating classic, which was created in 1986 by researching everything Digest editors could find about the ship and then deftly cutting it down to our book-section size.

If a poet called this the cruellest month, it must have had to do with April Fool pranks (page 116). This sounds like another prank, but I started out to do a serious article on spam and e-mail frauds and ended up responding to some spammers, to learn more about their tricks. It ended up in Quirks (page 43).

Mohan Sivanand

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LIFE WELL SHARED

Reader's Digest

APRIL 2012

FEATURES

*On the cover

A century of *Titanic* truths.

COVER IMAGE: MASTERFILE INDIA; REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION FROM *TITANIC IN PHOTOGRAPHS* (THE HISTORY PRESS)

Reader's Digest

DEPARTMENTS

RD LIVING

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Outrageous!

AN OPEN PHOTO-EDITORIAL



Almost every Indian child is mentally or physically abused at school, says a new study.

S. RAJAN

It is illegal. And violence only breeds more of the same. Yet a year-long study on corporal punishment, involving 6632 children from across seven Indian states, released by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) reveals that almost every child—a shocking 99.86 percent—was subjected to mental or physical abuse in schools. As many as 81.2% of the children were being told that they're incapable of learning. Students also admitted to suffering different kinds of physical abuse: getting caned (75%), slapped on the face (69.9%), hit on back (57.5%), ears boxed (57.4%).

Get the facts right, if you thought all this happens only in state-run or municipal schools, and not in the private ones. It's the same in *all* kinds of schools. A 13-year-old Kolkata boy committed suicide after he was caned by his private-school principal in February 2010. Later, the principal admitted that he didn't know that caning was illegal. And, last September, N. Anisha, a ninth-standard Chennai student, blamed her two teachers, in her suicide note, before taking her own life.

You can help reduce the barbarity. Discuss the NCPCR findings with your child's teachers. And make children aware that they must be taught with love, not fear.



Send us ideas for Outrageous! on something we need to think about or change. We pay ₹3000 if an idea is accepted.

Reader's Digest

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React

LETTERS FROM READERS


!n My Opinion

BY SIMON DOLAN

'Want to be a success in business? Avoid university!'

Further education may be a costly waste of time if you're hoping to be the next Dhirubhai Ambani

Needless Degrees?

By saying that to be a success in business, you must avoid college [In My Opinion, February], Simon Dolan is glorifying his chosen path and denouncing the scholarly. Not all college dropouts are successful. Now that he has a lot of money, Mr Dolan should join a university. It's never too late. *P. Mohankumar*, Mumbai

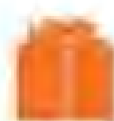
Someone joining a flourishing family business early in life is quite likely to follow the tried and tested and become successful in due course. But embracing a successful family business after completing higher education in a related field could take the venture to still greater heights.

Dr Narendra Kumar, New Delhi

A well-qualified person, I landed in a company where both the MD and the VP were much less educated than me, but brilliant. Did I waste all my years acquiring knowledge and experience? No. My learning has guaranteed me a decent and honourable life. *R. Balasubramanian*, Mumbai

Being hardworking, "street smart" and passionate about some enterprise is an established formula for success. But I will never recommend it at the cost of education. Many successful persons regret, later in life, their lack of an education. Such articles in RD should come with a word of caution for young readers.

Lt Col (retd) Kulbir Singh, Mohali, Punjab

 *Colonel Singh gets this month's Best Letter prize.* —*Eds*

One shoe does not fit all feet. Please see the résumés of the senior executives of all large corporations today. Success for dropouts cannot be made a thumb rule.

H.K. Tewari, via e-mail

Little does one realize that these university dropout-tycoons often depend on university stalwarts for getting things done.

Aruna Nemani, via e-mail

Reforming Convicts

Governments spend millions to protect one terrorist [Outrageous! January] while thousands of petty criminals are forced to live in inhuman conditions in ill-maintained jails [My Story, February]. Where is the scope for them to reform?

Satish Bijoor, Mumbai

I have been imprisoned in my pain, physical and mental. At all these times it was writing that made me look beyond the walls that surrounded me. Writing helped in building self-esteem and, most important, in forgetting that I was still a prisoner to the pain and trauma that haunted me. I wish that Norman Yammine becomes a great writer who will inspire others like him to write. *Vijayshree K.*, Hyderabad

This is the story of an extraordinary reformation. Norman came out of his negativity and depression to become an author for the Digest. The prison authorities too deserve credit for making an inmate mentor other prisoners. *P.C. Sockey,* Buldhana, Mah.

Fight for a Cause

A marriage should be a blend of two personalities whose separate characteristics and beliefs are still distinguishable [The Good Fight, February]. I love my husband not despite our differences but because of them. He has helped to harden my "pushover" personality, while I have helped to soften some of his rough edges. We both still stand firm for our individual beliefs, and this just adds fuel to our fire! *L.W.,* via e-mail

Why should there be fights in every marriage? I've been married 60 years, and I know something about having a good relationship. When we have a disagreement, I stop and think, *Is this something that is important?* If it's not, I let it pass. If it is, a little reasoning, and the matter is done—without a fight. The result: We get along just fine with love and kisses. *Augie Gessert Jr,* via e-mail

Fearsome Food

"Tasting Safari" [February] certainly induces fear and revulsion, especially about the unspeakable cruelty inflicted on animals by humans in the name of taste.

K.S.N. Murty, Hyderabad

I am not as brave as the writer, who was not only able to put these foods in her mouth without throwing up but could also rate them! I don't understand the need to consume food that smells awful and is likely to kill you. *Edith D'Sa*, via e-mail

Heart Matters

Women remain workaholics, taking upon themselves every tangible task in the family [Heart Attack! Why Women Are at Greater Risk, February]. They even subconsciously assume the concerns and worries of others. Family members must share household chores and empathize

NEW

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K.V. Raghuram, Wayanad, Kerala

Wealth of Happiness

"How to Feel Rich" [February] gave me a flash of familiarity. I get this feeling every time I drive away from the city to my favourite tamarind tree and spread a mat under its inviting shade, sip cups of tea and doze off, forgetting all that is phoney and artificial. I feel richer with every trip. *P.G. Rajan,* Bangalore

My moment of wealth came when I was bedridden in a hospital because of a torn ligament and a pus-oozing foot-wound. I was agonizing and dependent on others even for basic needs. Then I saw an emaciated woman with a terminal disease in the same ward. Soon she was no more. I then looked at my foot and realized that my problem was really insignificant. *Krupa,* Pondicherry

Mind Your Ps & Qs

Education undoubtedly plays an important role in inculcating socially acceptable manners [Where Are Our Manners? January]. But what we need in this age of fast-vanishing human values are paradigm changes in teaching methods and curricula, which have lost all sensitivity.

Shreeprakash Sharma, Birauli, Bihar

One tip under "On the Device" section surprised me. Even though it mentions refraining from sending thanks at times, isn't it more polite to risk clogging an inbox with a brief 'Thank you' than to remain silent and be mistaken as rude?

Dr Deepika Amala A., Tiruchirappalli, TN

Blaring at Night!

In the daytime, if a normal horn is meant only for emergencies [Outrageous! December], what excuse can there be for using reverse-gear music at night? It should be mandatory for a switch to be installed, enabling the driver to mute the reverse horn at night. *Pesi J. Padshah,* Pune

Living Dangerously

My fear that danger lurks around every corner melted away when I read "The Petrified Woman!" [February]. That is until I learnt from your health sections that I'd better control my cholesterol before heart disease strikes, change my diet to prevent heartburn, sleep longer, get more vitamin D, and take the iPod headphones off my kids before they go deaf. I'd better get to the doctor now.

Brian Strull, via e-mail



The author of the best letter, chosen by the editors, will receive a prize: The Reader's Digest book ***How to Write and Speak Better*** priced at ₹1099.



Post opinions to the Editorial address, or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com (no attachments please). Include your phone number and address. Letters may be condensed and edited for clarity.

Laughter! :)
THE BEST MEDICINE®



During a grammar lesson, Mrs O'Neill said, "Paul, give me a sentence with a direct object."

Paul replied, "Everyone thinks you are the best teacher in the school."

"Thank you, Paul," said Mrs O'Neill, "but what is the object?"

"To get the best marks possible," said Paul.

Shaun Miller

An elderly man is pulled over by police at 2am and asked where he's going at this time of night.

The man replies, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer then asks, "Really? Who's giving a lecture like that at this time of night?"

The man replies, "My wife."

William Carter

As I left work today, my boss said to me, "I know your hours are nine to five, but can you work an hour later tomorrow?"

I said, "Yeah, sure. See you at 10."

From the Internet

To me, boxing is like ballet, except there's no music and no choreography, and the dancers hit each other.

Jack Handey

A wife asks her husband, "Could you go to the shop for me and buy one carton of milk and, if they have eggs, get six."

A short time later, the husband comes back with six cartons of milk. The wife asks him, "Why on earth did you buy so much milk?"

He replies, "They had eggs."

André Harkin

My ex and I had a very amicable divorce. I know this because when I wrote the Facebook status "I'm getting a divorce," he was the first one to click Like.

Giulia Rozzi

An angel appears at a faculty meeting and tells the dean, "In return for your unselfish and exemplary behaviour, the Lord will reward you with your choice of infinite wealth, wisdom, or beauty."

"Give me infinite wisdom!" declares the dean without any hesitation.

"Done!" says the angel before disappearing in a cloud of smoke.

All heads now turn to the dean, who sits surrounded by a faint halo of light. "Well," says a colleague, "say something brilliant."

The dean stands and, with the poise of Socrates, opines, "I should have taken the money." *Henry Mixon*

Fascinating: Did you know you can just rip up a to-do list? *Tim Siedell*

A man dressed only in a gown, rushes into the hospital waiting room and says to his wife, "Take me home, now! I've changed my mind about the operation."

"Why?"

"Because the nurse said, 'It's a straightforward operation—very easy. You'll be fine, so stop worrying'."

"She was just trying to reassure you," said the man's wife.

"She wasn't talking to me," he said. "She was speaking to the surgeon!"

Margaret Clarkson

"Gimme a chocolate cone!" demands the customer as she walks into an ice-cream parlour.

"We're all out of chocolate," says the counterman.

"Then I'll take chocolate in a cup with chocolate sauce and ..."

"Sorry."

"Chocolate and vanilla combo?"

The counterman frowns at the customer, "Ma'am, do you see the 'straw' in strawberry?"

"Yes."

"Do you see the 'van' in vanilla?"

"Sure."

"Do you see the frickin' chocolate?"

"There's no 'frick' in chocolate."

"*That's* what I keep telling you!"

Q: Why does a man twist his wedding ring on his finger?
A: He's trying to figure out the combination. *Adam Joshua Smargon*

A woman walked up to an elderly man rocking in a chair on his porch.

"I couldn't help noticing how happy you look," she said. "What's your secret for a long, happy life?"

"I smoke three packs of cigarettes a day," he said. "I also drink a case of whisky a week, eat fatty foods and never exercise."

"That's amazing," the woman said. "How old are you?"

"Thirty-six." *Melissa Steginus*

Did you hear about the egotistical cannibal? He's completely full of himself. *Nick Vatterott*

We will pay for your Laughter anecdotes. Post it to the Editorial address or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com

Right Here Right Now

FOR REAL?

Sleep-texting

It sounds like an unlikely TV crime show defence: "Your honour, my client didn't intentionally send that abusive/salacious/bizarre text message, you see she was sleep-texting." However, some sleep experts think it's a real phenomenon, like sleepwalking.

Dr Markus Schmidt of the Ohio Sleep Medicine Institute, USA, says he's seeing more cases where people send (often nonsensical) texts while they're ostensibly asleep, and remember nothing of it the next day. Dr David Cunnington of the Melbourne Sleep Disorders Clinic also says he's seen cases—but that it's not yet as prevalent as sleep-e-mailing.

Both doctors have a simple treatment: leave the phone and laptop outside the bedroom. *Hazel Flynn*





YOU BE THE JUDGE…

BABY-PROOF PHONE COVERS

A good idea, since baby is going to be handed the expensive phone anyway? Or a needless product aimed at parents incapable of saying, "No, you can't play with that"? Fisher-Price has launched "the first-ever iPhone cover for babies." The Apptivity Case protects phones from "drops, dribbles and grubby fingers," stops babies from changing the display, and has a rattle and mirror (included, we presume, in case your Baby Genius app fails to captivate). *H.F.*

(SLEEP) GETTY IMAGES

THINGS WE LOVE



Camping it up

There's no doubt about it ... these tents are, ahem, outstanding in their field. They're just as waterproof and easy to erect as regular-looking tents, but FieldCandy's eye-catching designs bring a little art and whimsy to the great outdoors. The whimsical choices include tents that look like they're made of bubble wrap or bricks, or which seem to reveal the lovers within. On the art side are abstracts, butterflies and graphic designs. Visit *fieldcandy.com* *H.F.*





Europe celebrates spring

Great events you must know about

Kite Festival: Berck-sur-Mer, France

Kite lovers will definitely have a great time in Northern France from April 7 to 16. The town then hosts one of Europe's biggest kite festivals, bringing together kite-flyers from Asia, the US and Europe. Visitors can admire crazy kites, from flying fish to imaginary monsters, and watch thrilling competitions.



Feria de Abril: Seville, Spain

Flamenco dancing, horse shows, and loads of tempting culinary treats—that's the colourful April Fair (April 24 to 29) in the Andalusian capital.



Sächsilüüten: Zurich, Switzerland

Fed up with winter? Join the people of Zurich as they bid it goodbye in the third weekend in April. Thousands of locals and tourists flock into the city to party. Don't miss the colourful parade of the guilds on Monday, which culminates in the burning of the Böögg—a snowman effigy representing winter.

Scoppio del Carro: Florence, Italy

Come and see the Scoppio del Carro (or Explosion of the Cart) on April 8. Following an ancient tradition, a beautifully decorated cart is placed in front of the dome on Easter Sunday. As Mass in the dome comes to a close, an artificial dove bearing a spark shoots out on a wire and sets the fireworks inside the cart alight—thus sprinkling a blessing all over.



Cuckoo Day: Marsden, West Yorkshire, UK

Legend has it that people of Marsden realized that when a cuckoo arrived in the village, good (warmer) weather came with it. Reason enough to celebrate this event annually with a festival. This year's is on April 21.

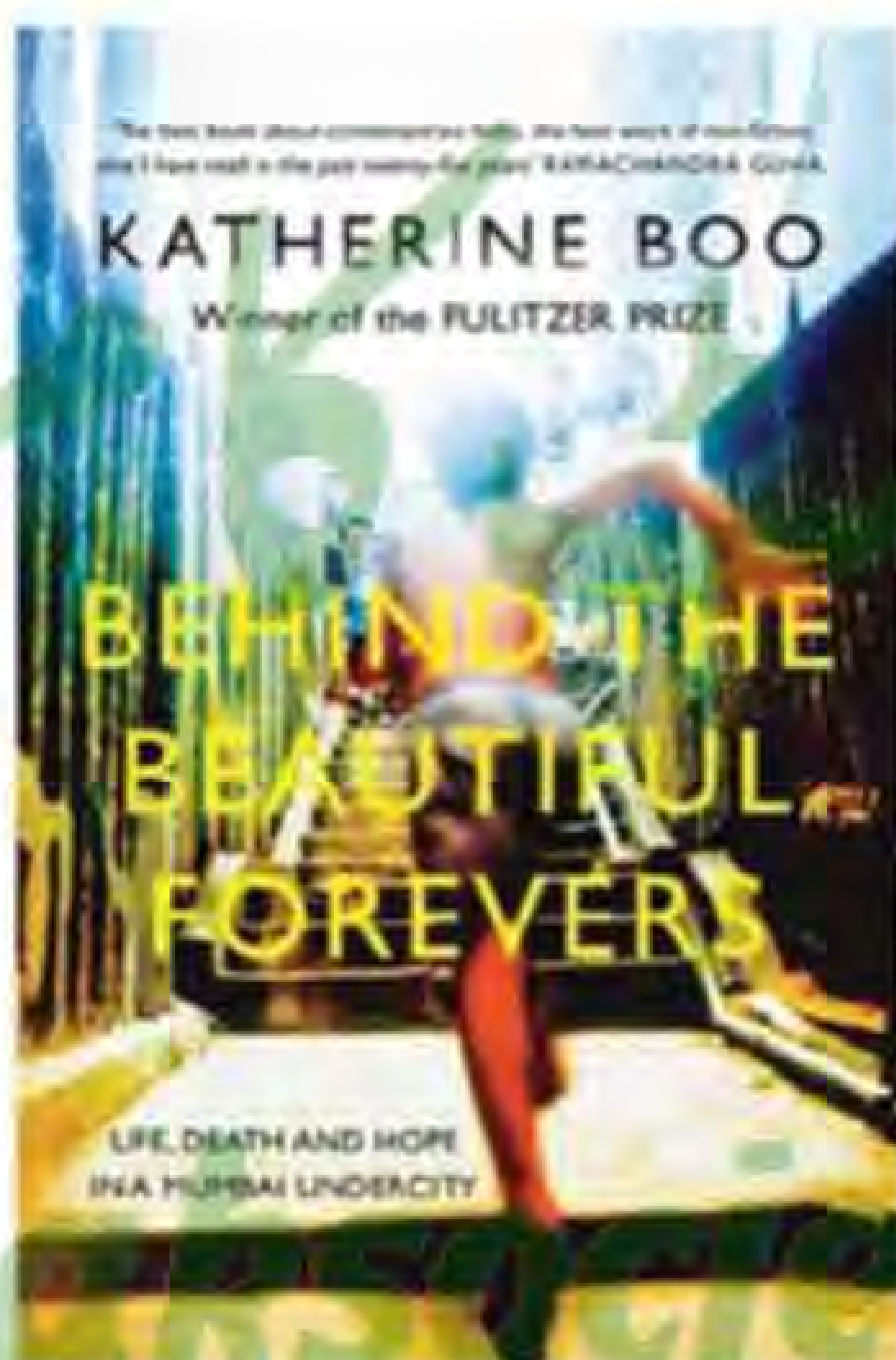


Capturing Life in the Undercity

BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL FOREVERS
LIFE, DEATH AND HOPE IN A MUMBAI UNDERCITY
By Katherine Boo
(Penguin) ₹499

Even those not especially interested in the lives of slumdwellers are likely to find this book a riveting read. A non-fiction *tour de force*, it is a closely observed and beautifully written account of the personal lives of more than a dozen residents of a Mumbai slum.
It is also yet another embarrassing instance of a foreigner reporting on Indians in a way few Indian journalists can match.

An award-winning American journalist who has written extensively about poor communities in the US, Katherine Boo became interested in India after she fell in love with an Indian. Urged by him not to take India at "face value," she grew impatient with the conventional view of slumdwellers as people unwilling or incapable of doing anything to improve their living conditions. She felt the reasons for their poverty were not so simple. In her search for better answers, she posed different questions: What kind of opportunities for advancement do slum people have? What kind of



capabilities are fostered by the market and by the government's social and economic policies? What kind of talents remain unfulfilled? Why, given the injustices in our society, are slumdwellers by and large so peaceful? Why don't our cities implode?

She therefore decided, as she puts it, "to follow the inhabitants of a single, unexceptional slum over the course of several years to see who got ahead and who didn't, and why, as India prospered." So from November 2007 to March 2011, she kept visiting Annawadi, a slum of 3000 people living in 335 huts near Mumbai airport and talking to its residents. Thanks to her persistence and her superb Indian interpreters, people opened up to her in ways that they had not even done to their own families.

The book gets its title from the slogan "Beautiful Forever" in advertisements for Italianate marble tiles all along a concrete wall that hides Annawadi from the road to the airport. Its main characters include Abdul Husain, a hardworking, teenage junk dealer who makes enough to support his family; Zehrunisa, his

tender-hearted but foul-mouthed mother; Fatima, a promiscuous, one-legged woman who is the Husains' neighbour; Asha Waghekar, an intelligent and ambitious Shiv Sena worker who hopes to become a municipal corporator; her good-looking, college-going daughter Manju who teaches slum kids English; Meena, a Tamil Dalit who is Manju's best friend; Sunil Sharma, a runty 12-year-old 'bhaiyya' who sells garbage to Abdul and is perceptive beyond his years; and Kalu, Abdul's friend, who specializes in stealing airport recycling bins and is a first-class mimic of movie stars ranging from Bruce Lee in *Enter the Dragon* to Deepika Padukone in *Om Shanti Om*. Officialdom is represented by policemen, government hospital doctors, judges, and bureaucrats, nearly all of them corrupt.

Boo's portrayal of Annawadi is built around a ghastly incident in the slum in which Fatima, after a quarrel with the Husains, pours kerosene on herself, lights a match, then douses the flames with water. In hospital, Fatima claims that Abdul, his father Karam, and his older sister Kehkashan set her on fire. But Noori, Fatima's eight-year-old daughter, who has witnessed the incident, tells the police the truth. So the cops, seeing an opportunity to extract money from the Husains, send a special executive officer of the state government to persuade Fatima to confess that she burnt herself, but to accuse the three Husains of physically assaulting her before her self-immolation. This enables the police to arrest the Husains for incitement to suicide.

A few days later, an infection kills Fatima. To cover up their lack of care, the hospital doctors adjust Fatima's medical record from 35 percent burns to 95 percent. Meanwhile, Zehrunisa and Kehkashan clean Fatima and cover her bier with their best cotton quilt before the men take the body to a Muslim burial ground.

To know what happens after that, read the book. But to get a sense of the quality of Boo's writing, read this paragraph about Zehrunisa's feelings after she cleans Fatima:

"Zehrunisa returned to her hut and sobbed, still clutching the rag with which she'd cleaned her neighbour. She didn't cry for the fate of her husband, son, and daughter, or for the great web of corruption she was now forced to navigate, or for a system in which the most wretched tried to punish the slightly less wretched by turning to a justice system so malign it sank them all. She cried for the manageable thing—the loss of that beautiful quilt, a parting gift to a woman who had used her own body as a weapon against her neighbours."

ASHOK MAHADEVAN

Ask Laskas

JEANNE MARIE LASKAS



My husband and I were *warmly received when we moved into a new neighbourhood this past summer. But recently the woman who lives behind us came over to complain about our baby, who sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night and cries. She says we should either close the windows or figure out how to stop the crying. It's too hot to shut the windows, and he's learning how to fall asleep by himself. Now when he cries, I feel self-conscious. Am I wrong to ignore her?*

All Cried Out

Dear All,
Nope, you're right to ignore her and thus hasten the learning curve: Ms Sleep Deprived needs to learn to shut her own window. Or buy some earplugs. (Baking your baby in a hot, stuffy room is not going to solve anybody's problem.) Of course, in the spirit of neighbourliness, you can take the insomniac a peace offering—some homemade sweets or a house gift—and apologize for the trouble Junior is causing her. Bring Junior along and perhaps he'll coo and be so adorable that she'll fall hopelessly in love.

Jeanne Marie Laskas is not a shrink, but she does have uncommon sense.

Some of our relatives *post pictures and videos of every activity—even just a casual gathering—on a public website. Without fail, unflattering images of my husband and me pop up after each gathering. Personal pictures would be understandable, but not on a website! Should I just ask not to be filmed?* *Out of the Picture*

ILLUSTRATED BY ISTVAN BANYAI

Dear Out,
Isn't this an increasingly common conundrum of our high-tech age? I'm with you. I'd be embarrassed to tears if some of my sillier moments were posted on someone's Facebook page. Since there's no stopping anyone from posting photos of you once the images are on the ol' smart card, your only option is to say "No photos, period" when you're at a social gathering. Meantime, allow me to address social networkers everywhere: People! In an effort to create a civilized cyberspace, think before you post that photo of Uncle Schlubby doing the hula in his ill-fitting swim trunks. The Golden Rule applies to the virtual as well as the real world. Do unto others...!

Life's Little Etiquette Conundrums

Am I the only one offended when an invitation to a barbecue requests that I bring my own meat? To me, hosting a barbecue is an all-or-nothing proposition. Bring Your Own Bottle is one thing; BYOM is another. The whole thrill of being a host is in arranging the entire experience for your guests and basking in the praise.

As a guest, you are free to decline the invitation or you may attend with your own slab of meat. But getting "offended" by someone who does something in a way you're not accustomed to? Seems like a waste of charcoal to me.

There is a woman *in the office who is excessively loud and laughs all day long through paper-thin cubicles. It's an obnoxious laugh—not at all pleasant. She even laughs her words instead of speaking them. What is the best way to handle this?* Annoyed

Dear Annoyed,
Supervisor time! This is why your boss makes the big bucks. Alert her or him to the problem, and while waiting for the situation to improve, be glad you got a cubicle near a laugher instead of a crier.

Whenever my wife's mother *and sister visit, they insist on disciplining my children, and their standards are much stricter than ours. My wife won't stand up to them, and our kids are starting to dislike them, to the point of crying when we say Grandma and Auntie are coming over. What is the best way to tell them they are destroying their relationship with our kids?* Permissive Pop

Dear Permissive,
Your kids, your house, your rules. This isn't about helping the in-laws preserve their relationship with your kids. It's about your kids! They need firm, consistent boundaries—not a bunch of rules that change depending on who happens to stop over. If your wife won't explain this basic rule of parenting to Grandma and Auntie, then you must!







It was truly a moment of pride at SRM University when students from twelve departments unleashed their innovative talent to design and launch a nano-satellite called SRMSAT. The satellite was launched into orbit by ISRO's PSLV-C18 along with Mega-Tropiques satellite, an Indo-French mission.

SRMSAT is now at 865 km earth-orbit monitoring greenhouse gases, carbon-dioxide and water vapour in the tropics.

The SRMSAT weighs 10.9 kg including three solar panels and was built at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore. The students are keeping track of the satellite monitoring its performance through the ground station, they erected at the university. SRM is the first private university in the country to have launched a nano-satellite.

Besides SRM has created award winning green airplane designs at NASA, USA. This places the SRM University in the same league as Purdue University, Indiana University and Georgia Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

Kudos to our students and thanks to ISRO and NASA

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ENGINEERING | MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES | MANAGEMENT | SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES



Greenheart



BY BITTU SAHGAL

Let's Learn From Nature

The sloth bear appeared out of nowhere on the edge of the mud road to our right. After giving my daughter Miel and me a casual over-the-shoulder, it ignored us for ten minutes and went about its business, upturning stones and dead wood. Only after six large rocks and an impossibly heavy log were rearranged did the bear go back to the first stone, where a protein-rich buffet of beetle larvae, scurrying ants, termites and other insects lay in store. Fascinated, we listened to the snuffling sounds of the large omnivore as it systematically 'vacuumed' its prey, using specially adapted mouth parts—long lips, no upper incisors, and a tongue that flicked in and out.

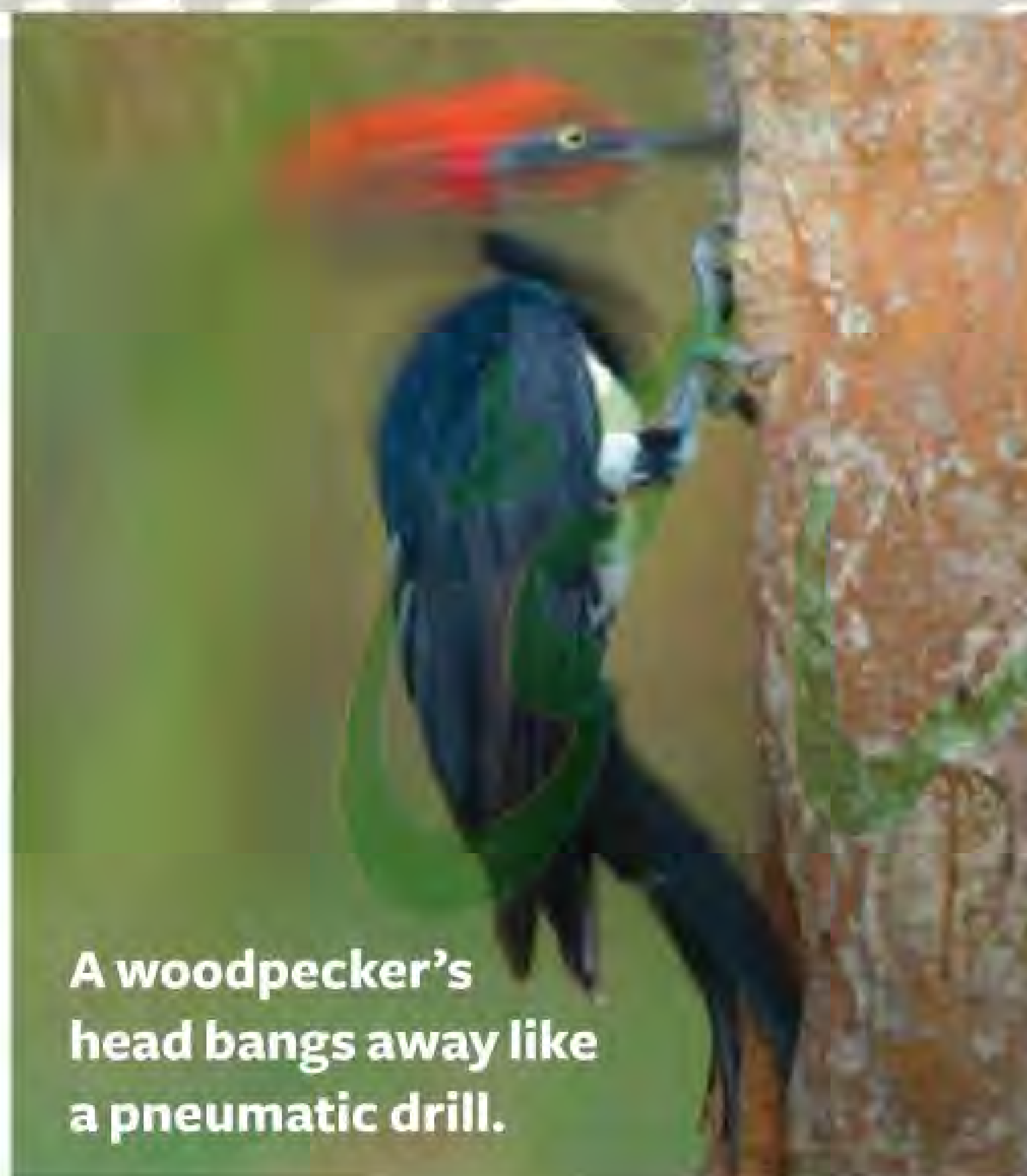
We were in Semli, en route to the Bakola Valley in Rajasthan's Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. Here tigers, leopards, wild pigs and sambar deer shared space with water birds, eagles, snakes, frogs and an astounding variety of butterflies. It's amazing how all these different species manage to take sustenance from a common, limited resource pool, *without* depleting it.

Everywhere, the one immutable law of nature which stands out above all others is "eat, or be eaten." To the uninitiated, the "defenceless" termites eaten by the bear might appear to be at a disadvantage.

It's not so.

Termites are survival veterans. Their ancestors were around in the Jurassic Age when reptiles dominated, almost 200 million years ago; the bear, on the other hand, is a relative novice in the survival game, having evolved in the Pleistocene Age, a mere 2.5 million years or so ago. One of the secrets of termite success has been their domination over climate within their extraordinary mound nests. Here the insects manage to maintain the temperature at 31 degrees C, give or take a degree, and humidity at 99 to 100 percent. All this is done without resorting to fossil fuels, through heat exchange strategies that include thermoregulation by tapping into the lower temperatures that prevail several metres below ground, and by shifting earth and plant matter around within the nest to ensure a reliable food supply based on

Bittu Sahgal is Editor of *Sanctuary Asia* magazine and a member of the National Board for Wildlife.



A woodpecker's head bangs away like a pneumatic drill.



A termite mound nest uses amazing technologies.

climate control. Little wonder then that architects have begun to offer structures inspired by termites to save both fossil energy and money.

With our technology and the power of abstraction, humans are undoubtedly remarkable creatures. But to presume we are invincible, particularly in an era of climate change, would be a mistake. Unlike other species, we consume too much, waste too much and possess lifestyles that are inflexible. But remember, it isn't the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent. Survivors are the ones that are the most adaptable to change.

Forewarned is forearmed. Like prospectors during a gold rush, innovators are racing to discover elegant stratagems used by species over eons to overcome the trials of life. These go beyond the shark-to-submarine or dragonfly-to-helicopter inventions commonly associated with biomimicry. How, for instance, do mangroves, crocodiles and penguins remove excess salt to sustain themselves in saltwater environs? What precise neck and cranial design allows woodpeckers to pummel tree trunks at speeds that should be turning their brains to mush?

Urban transport, flood or disease control, drought tolerance, enhanced life-expectancy, all these and more human quests have solutions awaiting discovery within nature's fold. All we need is some humility, mixed liberally with curiosity and respect, to flow with nature's tide towards the safest and most exciting of human adventure—survival.

Janine Benyus, biologist, author and biomimicry expert, put it best: "The more our world functions like the natural world, the more likely we are to endure on this home that is ours, but not ours alone." ■



"... and could I just see your insurance policy?"

I work in sales. Once during a conference in Manali, my boss's cellphone stopped working. So he asked for my phone, saying he'd get many important calls, and changed its SIM card. At the end of the day he looked annoyed.

"There was not a single call on your cellphone all day!" he told me. "What kind of a salesperson are you?" He'd forgotten that it was his SIM card he had on my phone.

Bhushan Chander Jindal, Jalandhar

I enjoy my job in a daycare centre, but it is busy and often stressful. During the winter months, the staff keeps track of missing articles of kids' outdoor clothing on a whiteboard. One morning, under our "Items Lost" heading, I was surprised to read "Sanity." *Raquel Duffek*

My friend was working at an amusement park when a couple stopped him. "Excuse me," said the woman, pointing to a pond. "What is that water made out of?"

Bemused, my friend replied, "Two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen."

"See?" she said to her boyfriend. "I told you it wasn't real."

Amelia Wines

Before the shopper could pay with a personal cheque, I needed her address. "What's your street name?" I asked.

"I don't have a street name," she said. "I go by Juanita."

Amanda Carpenter

Seen in a bakery display case in a US restaurant: "Please use tongues, not hands, to remove cookies."

Linda Martin

ILLUSTRATED BY TERESA PARKHURST BURNS

From the Oops File

Everyone makes mistakes, even newspapers. A selection of the best corrections:

- Last week's column mistakenly misidentified a source. The European Commission president is Romano Prodi, not Buffy the Vampire Slayer.
- There was a typo in lawyer Ed Morrison's ad. His logo is: "Your case is no stronger than your attorney," not "stranger."
- Because of a reporting error, Dr Arleigh Dygert Richardson III was described in his obituary as favouring tacky pants with tweed jackets and Oxford shirts. Dr Richardson favoured khaki pants.
- Norma Adams-Wade's column incorrectly called Mary Ann Thompson-Frenk a socialist. She is a socialite.

From *The Book of All-Time Stupidest Top 10 Lists* by Kathryn and Ross Petras (Workman Publishing)

We have a Polish lad working at our factory. I had always called him Justin, but one day he corrected me saying, "My name is Justinas."

"Oh, sorry," I replied.

"Is there a shorter version of that I can use?"

"No."

"Well, what does your mum call you?" I asked.

"Son."

R. Winter

A much respected police colleague who had mentored many people, including me, was retiring. At his farewell party, the chief inspector was full of praise for him, saying how many of the assembled throng wouldn't be there if it hadn't been for his guidance. Overcome with emotion, I said, "I, for one, can say that I would not be in the position I am if it were not for this man!"

The hall rocked with laughter—not the warm round of supportive applause I was expecting. Then I remembered that I was eight months' pregnant.

Glenda Lake

Don't Call Us, We'll Call You

A job interview is a place to impress future bosses. These responses to questions posed by hiring managers left the wrong sort of impression:

- Why should we hire you? "I would be a great asset to the events team because I party all the time."
- Why are you leaving your current job? "I was fired from my last job because they were forcing me to attend anger-management classes."
- Tell of a time you made a mistake and how you dealt with it. "I stole equipment from my old job, and I had to pay for its replacement."
- Have you submitted your two weeks' notice to your current employer? "What is two weeks' notice? I've never quit a job. I've always been fired."

Rachel Zupek, careerbuilder.com



Get paid! Your anecdote is worth ₹1000. Post it to the Editorial address or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com

"I Think, Therefore I Spam"

... has become the way forward for too many e-mail pests. How **Mohan Sivanand** deals with them every single day

I ought to write "Manage spam, delete forwards" next to the 9am slot for every single day in my desk diary. But then I don't write "Brush teeth" next to 6am either. I automatically start my workday by deleting spam, or at least most of it.

Today, there's one from young Ayeda in Nigeria. "My name is Ayeda Musa," she writes, "and I am a girl... and personally became interested in being your friend, and even more, as time goes on we will get to know each other better."

For me, at age 60, this was like a blast from the past. "Dear Ayeda," I wrote. "Where are you, Sweetheart? Send me your picture, and I will tell you how old I am."

And there was V. Vasudevan. "Please Help!!!" he e-mailed me recently, "I had to rush off to Spain... and robbers made away with my air ticket, cash and other valuables. I am stranded in a hotel. Please can you loan me $2000 so that I can settle my bills and book the next flight home? I promise to pay you back."



You've got mail—with the real thing!

MULTIVISION GRAPHICS

Now, that's money I could easily part with. Why, in November I'd won half a million UK pounds from the "Office of British Telecommunication." I'd also won £500,000 from a "BBC 2012 Poverty Alleviation Program." Another £365,000 from Coca-Cola. And just nine hours ago, I learnt as I write this, yet another "half a million UK pounds

from Coca-Cola." There's also a Mrs Regina Matthew, who e-mailed me from Ivory Coast. Her late husband Joe Matthew left her 6.5 million US dollars. Regina, childless, is herself about to die of cancer. So she wants to give it all to me.

I worry, *Just what do I do with so much money?* One reason why I responded to Vasudevan in Spain:

> Dear Vasu,
>
> I am so sorry to hear this. In fact only yesterday I'd met your cousin Madhavan, who told me that you were away. Please let me know how I can call you and send you the money. I can ask a friend in Spain to help you. Are you in Madrid? Meanwhile, take care.
>
> Mohan Uncle

Vasudevan was quick to reply [copy-pasting, unedited]:

> Thanks a lot please you can send it via western union money transfer with my name on this address: Casas de Miravete 28-B, Madrid, Spain.

We corresponded for a few more days, me with excuses for my delay in sending the money, and he sounding increasingly frantic. I finally forwarded our entire correspondence to the Spanish consulate in Mumbai, asking them to "please send it to the Madrid police for further action."

Routinely deleting forwards is an important part of my daily 9am spam-management ritual. This way useful e-mails alone show up.

In the past, *forward* normally meant the opposite of *backward*. Today *forward* is a full-fledged noun: a piece of unsolicited e-mail you get from a former colleague, a retired uncle, new pal or some random pest who's got hold of your e-mail address. It works something like this: Retired Uncle gets an unsolicited e-mail. He reads it and is so excited, he wants to share it. He forwards it to all his surviving nearest and dearest not realizing that, in the process, he's become another pest. One dear former colleague spams me on average thrice a day—forcing me to erase 1095 forwards a year, from just one sender.

Despite spam being such a global phenomenon, few people know or remember the origins of the word. Before our Internet Age, *spam* just meant meat, *sp*iced h*am* actually, which often came in a can. The connection with e-mail derives from an episode in an old British TV comedy in which spam featured in almost every dish in a cafe, and where the word *spam* is said about 132 times.

Experts at first distinguished the two by calling the inedible one "electronic spam," which at any rate has much more variety. For instance, one offered to flatten my tummy. I did not respond, although it might have helped me. A second one offered to unflatten another part of my anatomy. I didn't need it, but I responded (notice how spam can

make you act irrationally). "No, thanks," I wrote. "I'm quite satisfied with the size of my breasts."



I also replied to Regina Matthew, the childless, terminally-ill lady who wanted to give me her millions:

Dear Regina,

Very sweet of you to think of me. Sorry, must be so long, I can't really remember when we last met. Anyway, tell me what I must I do to get the money?

Your adopted son, Mohan

A religious soul, Regina replied. "Faced with life's uncertainty," she wanted me to send her my "direct contact information—full name, home address, phone, fax and bank details—to enable me to obtain an authorization letter that will officially and legally approve you as the next of kin..." The kind lady ended with, "Please remember to put me in your daily prayers for God's healing in my life."

I have not prayed for Regina so far—because if she survives the cancer, I might lose $6.5 million.

By evening I also heard from the beautiful, 23-year-old Ayeda Musa in Nigeria. She'd attached her photo, as per my request. Recall how, in her first e-mail, she was personally interested in me, but all that charm had evaporated in a matter of hours. All she wanted to do now was share her dear departed daddy's $10.5 million with me. How insensitive!

And Vasudevan? After I blew the whistle on him, having forwarded our correspondence to the Spanish consulate, I'd hoped that the *policía* in Madrid would act fast. I'd imagined those cops walking him out of apartment 28-B, all handcuffed and humiliated, into a van waiting outside Casas de Miravete.

They'd then hold a proper Spanish inquisition, charge Vasu under what would be their equivalent of our Section 420, maybe even deport the crook back to India. He'd be all over the papers, on TV and Twitter for having finally been apprehended by the ingenious efforts of a Mumbai journalist who went out of his way to forward...

Did I say forward? Maybe that's why you didn't see all those things happening to Vasudevan—or to me. Somebody at the Spanish consulate must have thought, *Uno más plaga!* [One more pest!] Just before deleting one more forward.


Were you conned by online crooks? Spam us: editor.india@rd.com



!n My Opinion

BY SOPHIE ROBEHMED

Mixed Race is Best

Some say they lack a sense of national identity, but this British-Lebanese journalist argues that mixed-race children are a great hope for the future

In 1969, British pop group Blue Mink had a hit with "Melting Pot," a song that envisages a "beautiful" dream world where everyone is mixed race. Granted, it has some pretty dreadful lyrics—"Curly Latin kinkies/mixed with yellow Chinkies" being a prime example—and was mocked in the TV show *The Office* when the boss from hell David Brent sang it to help racial harmony in the workplace. But, somewhere in there, it's a record with a reasonable point.

Take Britain for example. Almost one in ten British children are now mixed race, according to a recent study by UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission, and many people worry that this growing section of society has a damaging lack of British and personal identity. I disagree. In fact, I would argue that the rise in mixed-race kids is one of the best things that could happen to Britain.

I should declare an interest here—I'm half-Lebanese, half-English. But I'd say that, for starters, having



parents from different backgrounds tends to make one more tolerant. Growing up with two people who have very different traditions, cuisines and faiths means that the idea of discriminating against other ethnic or minority groups seems daft to me.

Marie*, my 23-year-old cousin, who's also half-Lebanese and grew up in Dubai, agrees. She was intrigued by a guy in her class who was half-Malaysian and half-Sri Lankan. "His mum was Muslim and his dad was Buddhist. I found his background fascinating," she says.

An increase in the number of British people who learn two or more languages at home enhances our relations and ability to trade with other countries, including emergent economic superpowers such as India. Indeed, more than two million Britons can already speak subcontinental languages like Punjabi. More mixed-race people may also make for a more mobile workforce.

"I'm more open to living in different places because it's not as if my family is based in one place," says Marie, who teaches English in South Korea.

Far from leaving me with an unfocused sense of identity, my diverse background actually gives me a unique sense of self. I'm proud to be different—the product of contrasting worlds coming together by chance. I'm possibly the only Sophie Robehmed in the world, and that's far more original than being a Smith, Jones or MacDonald.

My relatively exotic make-up doesn't stop me feeling proud to be British or celebrating national traditions, either—I like a Sunday roast as much as the next person. Look at the number of mixed-race sportsmen who feel honoured to represent Britain and boost its fortunes, including footballers Rio Ferdinand and Theo Walcott, Olympian Lord Coe (half-Indian mother), Cricketer Nasser Hussain, Formula one champion Lewis Hamilton and boxer Amir Khan. Then there are the likes of novelists Zadie Smith (*White Teeth*) and Monica Ali (*Brick Lane*), who blend their British and foreign heritage to bring something new and fresh to Britain's culture.

Less seriously, mixed-race people may be better looking, according to a recent study by Dr Michael Lewis at Cardiff University. He asked students to rate a random sample of 1205 portraits and found that mixed-race faces were more than half as likely again to be considered attractive than white or black people. There are several possible explanations, says Dr Lewis. It may be that there are so many good-looking dual-heritage faces in the media now, that we're conditioned to like them. More interestingly, a mixed-family background could make you genetically stronger and more appealing as a mate.

Dr Lewis believes that this genetic

*Name changed to protect privacy

CHALLENGE ANSWERS

SEE PAGE 153

Alphabet soup

1. HOUSEMAID 2. EQUATION 3. EUPHORIA 4. SEQUOIA

Triangle trial

Construct a three-dimensional pyramid shape, by first making a triangle out of three matches and then leaning each remaining match from a corner, meeting at the apex. The four triangles are the three sides plus the base.

Picture this

One way you could have started to solve this was to notice that the blank of 6-blank has to be in the same row as the 5-4 piece, the only piece that adds up to 9 by itself.



advantage may extend to other areas of life, too—though he stresses that, as yet, there's no firm evidence to back this up. But it's certainly true that many dual-heritage people seem to achieve more than their parents, Barack Obama being the most obvious example.

"My identity might begin with the fact of my race, but it didn't, couldn't, end there," Obama has said. "At least, that's what I'd choose to believe."

Perhaps because we don't identify ourselves with one particular ethnic group, many mixed-race people seem especially keen to transcend any negative connotations or disadvantages attached to their racial backgrounds.

"I took it upon myself to prove my ability to all those around me," says my friend Onya, a half-Guyanese half-English former model, now studying at Oxford University. "I've always wanted to encourage other children from minority backgrounds to aim high."

More than a million Muslims have migrated to Britain, partly because it's seen as more tolerant than any other European country, according to a study by the Institute for Public Policy Research. Isn't that a reputation for any nation to be proud of?



Would you marry or approve of your children marrying a foreign national? Write to editor.india@rd.com

GIVE DEATH A CUDDLE

An American company has launched a range of "Huggable Urns."

The plush cuddly animals—the most popular of which is "Angel Bear," which has detachable luminous wings—are designed to "take away the eerie feeling about death." Each has a zip-fastened slot into which a loved one's ashes are inserted and can be personalized, perhaps with a photograph of the deceased.

"They are discreet and stylish enough to keep visible in the house," say the manufacturers, "without causing embarrassment to visitors."

Word Power

BY ROB LUTES

Straight From the Horse's Mouth!

This month's quiz truly is the cat's pyjamas! It's full of genitive—or possessive—expressions. These useful little phrases are colourful, historical, mythical and sometimes kind of strange. But don't keep them at arm's length, for Pete's sake. Have some fun and test your knowledge.
Answers on next page.



1. widow's walk—A: an unsteady gait. B: railed walkway atop a seaside house. C: wreath-laying ceremony.

2. Occam's razor—A: the belief that neatness is required for entry into heaven. B: idea that the least complex of differing theories is the best choice. C: a false god.

3. deadman's hand—A: an unseen force. B: weakened leader. C: poker hand with two pairs.

4. bum's rush—A: a coerced departure. B: paltry sum of money. C: needless haste.

5. Hobson's choice—A: an improbable stroke of luck. B: avoidable mistake. C: predetermined pick falsely offered as an option.

6. mare's nest—A: a chaotic state. B: comfortable surroundings. C: unattainable destination.

7. tinker's damn—A: a type of manual labour. B: noisy activity. C: something too insignificant to worry about.

8. philosopher's stone—A: an elusive solution to achieve desired result. B: talisman. C: incomprehensible explanation.

9. donkey's breakfast—A: a poorly prepared meal. B: pallet. C: flower bed.

10. cat's paw—A: a raking tool. B: furtive movement. C: pawn.

11. horse's neck—A: a support beam. B: cocktail made with ginger ale and lemon peel. C: untapped source of strength.

12. Buggins's turn—A: an inconsiderate action. B: endless journey to an imaginary place. C: promotion based on seniority over performance.

13. God's acre—A: a metaphor for heaven. B: cemetery beside a church. C: fertile land.

14. cow's tail—A: the unravelled end of a length of rope. B: a feeble defence. C: forgotten item.

15. curate's egg— A: an impossible outcome. B: thing with positive and negative features. C: long-abandoned belief.

ILLUSTRATED BY LUC MELANSON

Answers

1. widow's walk—*[B]* a railed walkway atop a seaside house; as, From the *widow's walk*, she gazed out to sea. Used by sailors' wives.

2. Occam's razor—*[B]* the idea that the least complex of differing theories is the best choice; as, *Occam's razor* told him his car's stalling was due to an empty tank, not his alternator. From 14th-century William of Occam's law of economy.

3. deadman's hand—*[C]* a poker hand with two pairs; as, Thinking Ray had three queens, Andy folded his *deadman's hand*. From hand held by "Wild Bill" Hickok when murdered in 1876.

4. bum's rush—*[A]* a coerced departure; as, Terry's mother knew her son was late for work, so she gave him the *bum's rush* out the door. Origin unknown.

5. Hobson's choice—*[C]* a predetermined pick falsely offered as an option; as, Derrick had a *Hobson's choice* for his rental car, as the lot held only one vehicle. From Englishman Thomas Hobson's rule that the horse closest to the livery-stable entrance be rented first.

6. mare's nest—*[A]* a chaotic state; as, His boss's firing made Brent's job an administrative *mare's nest*. Origin unknown.

7. tinker's damn—*[C]* something too insignificant to worry about; as, "I don't give a *tinker's damn* about that." From tinkers' reputation for cursing.

8. philosopher's stone—*[A]* an elusive solution to achieve desired result; as, The frustrated author saw the literary award as the *philosopher's stone* to fame. From the mystical matter once thought to change metals into gold.

9. donkey's breakfast—*[B]* a pallet (makeshift straw mattress); as, When he saw his *donkey's breakfast*, First Mate Jones knew he would get no sleep. From historical use of straw to fill ships' mattresses.

10. cat's paw—*[C]* a pawn; as, Denise realized she'd been a *cat's paw* to get Fred into the party. From La Fontaine's fable, "The Monkey and the Cat."

11. horse's neck—*[B]* a cocktail made with ginger ale and lemon peel; as, A nervous Henry downed two *horse's necks* before Liz arrived. From the shape of the long piece of lemon peel.

12. Buggins's turn—*[C]* a promotion based on seniority over performance; as, A victim of *Buggins's turn*, Brody lost the VP job to the long-serving Alex. From *Buggins*, once a typical English surname.

13. God's acre—*[B]* a cemetery beside a church; as, Buried next to the chapel, Emma would spend eternity in *God's acre*. From German *gottesacker*.

14. cow's tail—*[A]* the unravelled end of a length of rope; as, The *cow's tail* made it hard to thread the line through the pulley. Origin unknown.

15. curate's egg—*[B]* a thing with positive and negative features; as, Uneven and gripping, the film was something of a *curate's egg*. From a curate in a 1895 cartoon serving his bishop a nearly perfect stale egg.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

- **7-10 fair**
- **11-12 good**
- **13-15 excellent**



Challenge a friend to beat your score in our online game at
readersdigest.com/wordpowergame

Reader's Digest

Congratulations to our ₹ 1 Crore Sweepstakes 2011 Winners.



Like every year, this year's Sweepstakes also left winners surprised and thrilled. The award ceremony was held at The Grand, New Delhi, on March 5, 2012. Reader's Digest gives you a glimpse of this year's lucky Sweepstakes winners—people just like you who believed and won.



Grand Prize ₹35 lakh

Mr S. L. Lohia receiving his cheque from Mr Ashish Bagga, CEO, India Today Group.

Thank You Prize ₹18 lakh or Honda Accord

Mr Hillol Kumar Mitra receiving his cheque from Mr Dinesh Bhatia, CFO, India Today Group.

In the words of Mr Mitra:

“I will spend some money on the education of my kids, go on a holiday and also contribute some of it to charity. I have been reading the Digest since the early '70s. I love the magazine and the books. I'm delighted to receive the prize.”





Gold Number Giveaway Prize ₹5 lakh

Mr V. B. Manohar receiving his cheque from Mr Manoj Sharma, Group Business Head, India Today Group.



President's Prize ₹2 lakh

Mr Rajiv R. Vyavahare receiving his cheque from Ms Priya Gandhi, Head, Marketing, Reader's Digest Books & Home Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.

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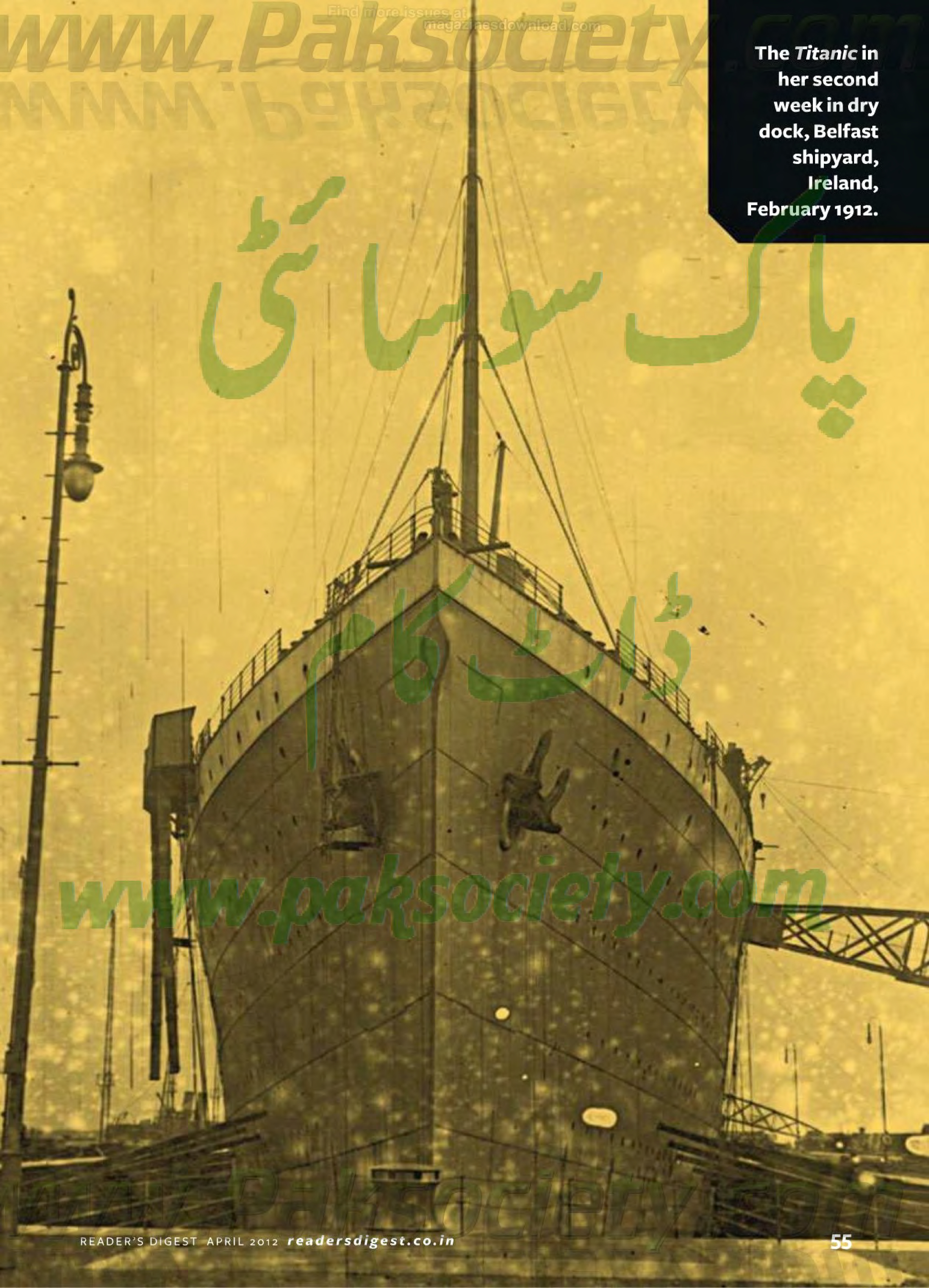


To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic* on April 15, 1912, we dug into our archives for this remarkable account of the disaster and its aftermath. For its original publication in 1986, our editors had compiled and condensed the story from dozens of sources. Today, the chronicle is as fresh and moving—and shocking—as it was several decades ago. Here is the unforgettable tale of

The 'Unsinkable' TITANIC

The White Star Liner *Titanic*, the largest ship the world had ever known, sailed from Southampton, England, on her maiden voyage to New York City on Wednesday, April 10, 1912. She was built with double bottoms, and her hull was divided into 16 watertight compartments. She was thought to be unsinkable and carried more than 2200 people. Occupying

TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES



The *Titanic* in her second week in dry dock, Belfast shipyard, Ireland, February 1912.

the first-class suites were many well-known men and women—millionaire John Jacob Astor and his young bride; US President William Howard Taft's close adviser Archibald W. Butt; former congressman and department store Macy's chief executive Isidor Straus; and J. Bruce Ismay, managing director of the White Star Line. In the crowded cabins of steerage class were more than 700 immigrants heading to the land of promise.

Sunday the 14th dawned fair and clear. At 9am, a message from the steamer *Caronia* sputtered into the wireless shack: "Captain, *Titanic*—westbound steamers report bergs, growlers, and field ice in 42 degrees N. from 49 degrees to 51 degrees W. Compliments—Barr." The message was delivered to Captain E.J. Smith, who wired an acknowledgment.

Just before noon, the rasping spark of early wireless spoke again across the water. It was the *Baltic*, warning the *Titanic* of ice on the steamer track. The wireless operator sent the message up to the bridge. Captain Smith read it as he was walking on the promenade deck and then handed it to Bruce Ismay without comment. Ismay read it, stuffed it into his pocket, told two women about the icebergs, and resumed his walk.

It was bitter cold on deck that evening, but the night was calm and fine. After dinner, some of the second-class passengers gathered for hymn singing. It was almost 10pm as the group sang the words of the mariner's hymn: "Oh, hear us when we cry to thee, for those in peril on the sea."

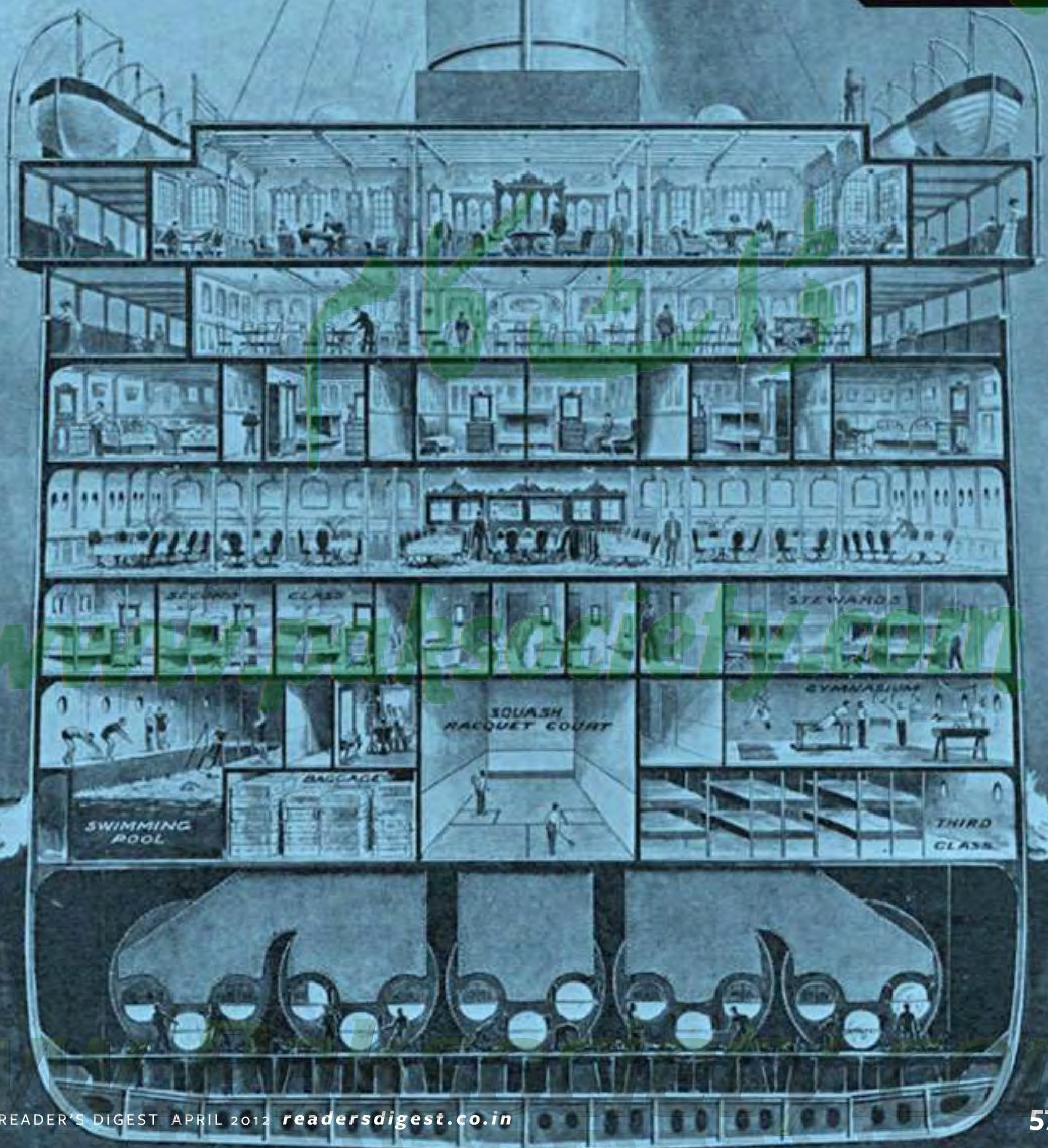
On the bridge was First Officer William Murdoch. At least seven wireless warnings about ice had reached the ship; lookouts had been cautioned to be alert. At 22 knots, its speed unslackened, the *Titanic* plowed on through the night.

High in the crow's nest, lookout Frederick Fleet peered into a dazzling night. There was no moon, but the cloudless sky blazed with stars, and the Atlantic was like polished plate glass. Lookouts were not supplied with binoculars, but at 11:40pm Fleet's eyes suddenly detected something directly ahead, even darker than the darkness. At first it was small, but every second it grew larger and closer. Fleet quickly banged the crow's nest bell three times, the warning of the danger ahead. At the same time, he lifted the phone and rang the bridge.

"What did you see?" asked a calm voice at the other end.

"Iceberg right ahead," replied Fleet.

Though they changed before the *Titanic* was built, the plans for it are shown in this 1909 illustration—with first-class passengers occupying the top four floors and steerage at right below the gym. The pool is at left.




First Officer William Murdoch (*far left*) and Captain John Smith (*far right*) of the *Titanic*.

TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

"Thank you," acknowledged the voice. Nothing more was said.

On the bridge, Quartermaster Robert Hichens was at the wheel. First Officer Murdoch gave the order: "Hard astarboard!" This meant turning the stern of the ship to starboard and the bow to port. As Murdoch telegraphed the engine room "full astern," Hichens obeyed the spoken order and threw his full weight to the wheel.

In the crow's nest, Fleet stood motionless as the silhouette loomed larger and larger. After what seemed an eternity, the *Titanic*'s bow [forward part] finally swung to port [left, if you stood on board facing the bow] and was beginning to clear the iceberg. Fleet braced himself as the forecastle brushed against the berg and ice tumbled onto the forewell deck.

A Ripping Sound

At the very bottom of the ship, fireman Frederick Barrett had been hard at work stoking the furnaces in No. 6 boiler room. Foaming green seawater suddenly exploded through the *Titanic*'s side, about half a metre above the floor plates, shearing the starboard [right, opposite of port] wall for the entire length of No. 6 and slightly into the

coal bunker in No. 5. The alarm bell was jangling above the watertight door, which had just begun to descend. Barrett managed to leap through the doorway and into No. 5 boiler room as the door shut.

“Mr Murdoch, what was that?” “An iceberg, sir. She was too close. I couldn’t do any more.”

Meanwhile, in the first-class dining saloon far above Barrett, four members of the ship’s crew heard a faint grinding jolt that seemed to come from somewhere deep inside the ship. It was not much, but enough to rattle the silverware that was set for breakfast the next morning.

Passengers in their cabins felt the jar too. Major Arthur G. Peuchen, starting to undress for the night, thought it was like a heavy wave striking the ship. To Lady Duff Gordon, waking up from the jolt, it seemed “as though somebody had drawn a giant finger along the side of the ship.” Hearing that grinding jar in the first-class smoking room, Spencer V. Silverthorne rushed out onto the deck. With a few other passengers, he was in time to see the iceberg scraping along the starboard side, a little higher than the boat (topmost) deck. As it slid by, they watched chunks of ice breaking and tumbling off into the water. In another moment, it faded into the darkness astern.

The excitement soon disappeared. The *Titanic* seemed as solid as ever, and it was too cold to stay outside any longer. Slowly, everyone filed back inside.

As the grinding noise died away, Captain Smith rushed onto the bridge from his cabin next to the wheelhouse. There were a few quick words: “Mr Murdoch, what was that?”

“An iceberg, sir. I hard-astarboarded and reversed the engines, but she was too close. I couldn’t do any more.”

In the stateroom of the *Titanic*’s principal designer, Thomas Andrews, the impact was so slight it escaped his notice. A knock on the door drew his attention. A sailor summoned him to the bridge, where the captain told Andrews what had happened. Water in the forepeak ... No. 1 hold ... No. 2 hold ... mail room ... boiler room No. 6 ... boiler room No. 5. Water four metres above keel level in the first ten minutes, everywhere except boiler room No. 5. Put together, the facts showed a 90-metre gash, with the first five compartments hopelessly flooded.

The conclusion was inescapable. The *Titanic* was on her way to the ocean floor, some 4000 metres below. Andrews estimated the ship had but 90 minutes left.

At 12:05am—about 25 minutes after that grinding jar—Captain Smith ordered Chief Officer H.F. Wilde to uncover the lifeboats. The *Titanic* carried only 16 boats and four canvas collapsibles capable altogether of holding about 1180 of the 2200 or so aboard. The captain himself then walked to the wireless shack. "Send the call for assistance," he ordered.

"What call should I send?" Jack Phillips asked.

"The regulation international call for help. Just that."

Less than 16 kilometres away, the *Californian* wireless operator Cyril F. Evans had closed down his set at the scheduled hour of 11:30.

The Light That Failed

The Cunard liner *Carpathia*, sailing from New York City, was bound for Gibraltar and the Mediterranean. Her extensive passenger accommodations—providentially—were nearly half empty.

The *Carpathia*'s radio operator was H.T. Cottam. Cottam's heart nearly missed a beat when out of the night came the dread letters of the international distress call: "CQD CQD SOS SOS. Come at once. We have struck a berg. Position 41.46 N., 50.14 W. CQD SOS!"

Cottam raced up to the bridge and breathlessly informed the officer of the watch, who in turn went to the captain's cabin.

Captain Arthur H. Rostron later wrote: "So incredible seemed the news that, having at once given orders to turn the ship, I got hold of the Marconi operator. 'Are you sure it is the *Titanic*?' I asked him. 'Quite certain,' he replied. 'All right,' I said then. 'Tell him we are coming.' "

"We are coming as quickly as possible," Cottam telegraphed, "and expect to be there within four hours."

"TU OM" ["Thank you, old man"].

After that, Cottam switched off his transmitter. He was careful not to do anything that might interfere with the *Titanic*'s signals. Presently, however, he overheard her exchanges with the *Frankfurt, Mount Temple*, and other ships—though all this time the *Californian*, which now lay less than 16 kilometres distant from the sinking liner, remained silent.

Playing the Game

Aboard the *Titanic*, the passengers stood calmly on the boat deck—unworried but confused, waiting for the next orders. Each class kept



The *Titanic* departing for her sea trials, April 2, 1912.

to its own decks—first class in the centre of the ship, second a little aft, third at the very stern or on the well deck near the bow. With uneasy amusement, they eyed how one another looked in life belts.

There had been no boat drill, the passengers had no boat assignments, and the going was slow. Second Officer Charles H. Lightoller, in charge of the port side, stood with one foot in Boat 6 and one on deck. He called for women and children. The response was anything but enthusiastic. Why trade the bright decks of the *Titanic* for a few dark hours in a rowboat? Even John Jacob Astor ridiculed the idea: "We are safer here than in that little boat." When Constance Willard flatly refused to enter the boat, an exasperated officer finally said, "Don't waste time—let her go if she won't get in!"

There was music to lull them too. Bandmaster Wallace Henry Hartley had assembled his men, and the band was playing ragtime music.

At 12:45am, a blinding flash seared the night as the first rocket shot up from the starboard side of the bridge. There was no more joking or lingering. In fact, there was hardly time to say goodbye.

"It's all right, little girl," called Dan Marvin to his new bride. "You go and I'll stay awhile." He blew her a kiss as she entered the boat. "Be brave, no matter what happens," Dr W. T. Minahan told his wife as he stepped back with the other men. But Mrs Isidor Straus refused to go. "I've always stayed with my husband; where you go, I go," she said.

No photographs are known to exist of the *Titanic*'s grand staircase. This one, from the *Olympic* liner, was similar. *Below left:* millionaire Benjamin Guggenheim, who went down with the ship. *Right:* passenger Lawrence Beesley tries out the gym with a friend.





Time was clearly running out. Soon the sea slopped over the *Titanic*'s forward well deck and rippled around the cranes, the hatches, and the foot of the mast. The nerve-racking rockets stopped, but the slant of the deck was steeper, and there was an ugly list to port.

A little group of millionaires stood quietly apart from the rest of the passengers on the boat deck; there were John Jacob Astor, George B. Widener, John B. Thayer, and a few others. Benjamin Guggenheim and his male secretary had changed back into evening dress. Declared Guggenheim, "We are prepared to go down like gentlemen." He gave his steward—in case he survived—a message for his wife. "Tell her I played the game out straight and to the end. No woman shall be left aboard this ship because Ben Guggenheim was a coward."

The poor Irish boys and girls from steerage were down on their knees, praying. An English priest, Father Thomas Byles, was moving to and fro among the passengers, hearing confessions and giving absolution. Every moment the black water was drawing nearer and nearer.

At 2:15am, as the crewmen were tugging at the last two collapsible boats, the bridge dipped under, and the sea rolled aft along the boat deck. At this moment, the ragtime ended, and strains of the hymn "Autumn" flowed across the deck and drifted into the still night far over the water.

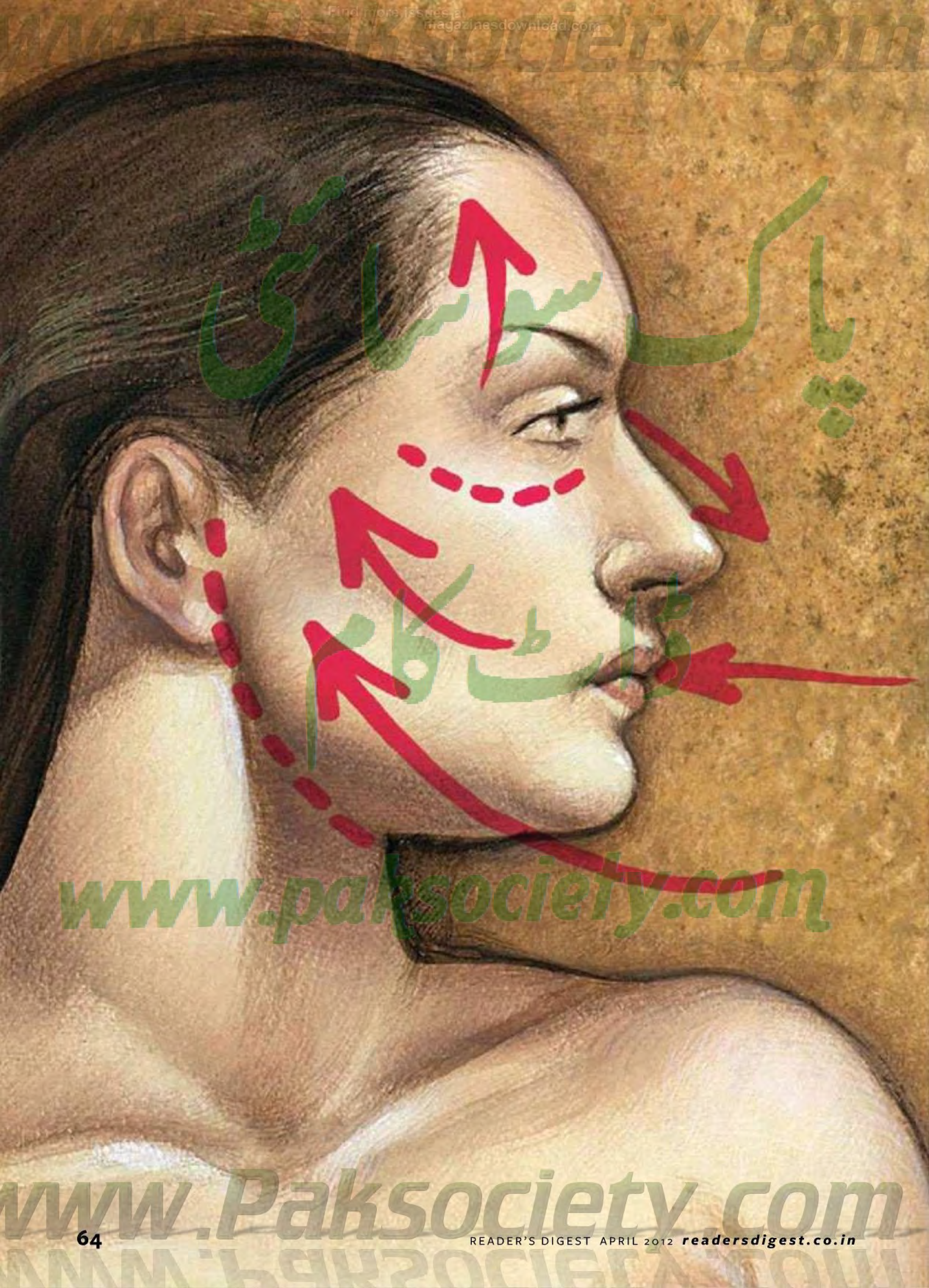
God of mercy and compassion
Look with pity on my pain;
Hear a mournful, broken spirit
Prostrate at thy feet complain.
Hold me up in mighty waters ...

"She's Gone"

Second Officer Lightoller later wrote: "There was only one thing to do, and I [decided I] might just as well do it and get it over, so, turning to the fore part of the bridge, I took a header. Striking the water was like a thousand knives being driven into one's body, and no wonder, for the temperature of the water was minus 2 degrees C.

"I suddenly found myself drawn to an air shaft by the sudden rush of the surface water now pouring down. I was held flat and firmly up against a grating on this opening with the full and clear knowledge that if this light wire carried away, there was a sheer drop of close to 30 metres, right to the bottom of the ship. Although

Continued on page 134.





COSMETIC SURGERY

CURE OR CURSE?

It's a big and fast-growing business but as with any other, it's "buyer beware"

BY SNIGDHA HASAN

"I can now wear my favourite fitted clothes, be it a sari or designer dress, without fretting about unsightly bulges," beams 49-year-old Rashmi Shah*, a Mumbai homemaker who underwent an abdominoplasty.

This operation, where a cosmetic surgeon removes excess skin and fat from the abdomen, can cost between ₹60,000 and 125,000. After surgery, tubes are placed for as many as four days beneath the operated area to drain accumulating fluid. Sutures, unless they're the self-absorbing kind, are removed after 10 to 12 days. It takes nearly six weeks to resume normal activity. The surgical scars take at least four months to fade. Those undergoing an abdominoplasty endure all that and the accompanying pain. Still the "fix" often rebuilds confidence. "Despite all my exercise and care, the one thing I couldn't fight was aging,

*Name changed on request.

ILLUSTRATED BY ANITA KUNZ

and I hated my love handles," says Rashmi, who wore a corset for six months following the operation. "I'm happy now."

Rashmi's cosmetic surgeon says he had turned down her earlier requests for the operation because she had been working out regularly to shed the fat, which, he suggested, was a better solution than any invasive procedure. "But I'd had enough of doing sit-ups," Rashmi explains ruefully. "It is frustrating when you try so hard to stay in shape and one part of your body does not respond."

Living longer

Any elective surgery might seem like an extreme way to manage midlife, but an ever-increasing number of people—especially women between ages 35 and 50—are choosing cosmetic procedures. The surgery comes with its own risks—right from the subsequent need for corrective surgeries, in many cases, to the body's own difficulty in accepting artificial enhancement or reduction. Patients with medical histories, like cardiac problems or diabetes, often invite trouble when they opt for cosmetic procedures. And, above all, the need for such surgery may often be a psychological one, arising from an innate sense of inadequacy or a traumatic past that remains unaddressed.

"Health in general has improved and people are living longer," observes Dr Anil Tibrewala, a Mumbai-based consultant plastic surgeon who has been in practice since 1989. "They might think, *'I may live another 20 years. Do I have to look like this?'* Years ago, had my sister told our father that she wanted a breast augmentation done, he'd have been bewildered. Today, things are different. The number of patients I have has increased three-fold since I started out."

Not surprising, because cosmetic surgery no longer raises eyebrows. Nor is it restricted to those in show business or the wealthy. "One day a *paan*-stall owner came to me asking that I fix his nose," Dr Tibrewala recalls. "He thought his nose was a bit too broad."

Surgical techniques have advanced too. "Infection following surgery is a rare occurrence now and administration of anesthetics is well-monitored," reassures Dr Tibrewala.

Rapid growth

Cosmetic surgery has a long history in India. Sushruta, an Ayurvedic surgeon who lived in the 6th century BC, described procedures like rhinoplasty—reconstruction of the nose—and various forms of skin grafts. Plastic surgeons have always needed to do skilled repairs and reconstructive work, on accident or war victims, restoring limbs and even genitals. Today's cosmetic surgeons perform plastic surgery routinely to enhance their patients' looks.

According to a recent Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) report, ₹1000 crore

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY DANIELLE EGAN



is spent annually on cosmetic surgery in India. "Medical tourism to India for cosmetic surgery is rising in popularity, with some hospitals focusing exclusively on foreign patients," says Delhi-based Dr Anil Kumar Murarka, a senior consultant in plastic, aesthetic and reconstructive surgery. In fact, the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery ranks India fourth on the list of plastic surgery hubs, after the US, China and Brazil. "Since cosmetic surgery offers better financial prospects, comparatively fewer budding surgeons specialize in reconstructive surgery," one leading plastic surgeon told Reader's Digest.

Being beautiful helps, but...

Behind these facts and figures is the age-old obsession with beauty. "Many studies indicate that attractive people are more successful," says Dr Peter Adamson, a University of Toronto, Canada, professor and facial plastic surgeon. He quotes everything from Plato to modern clinical polls as evidence: "Studies have shown that babies stare longer at beautiful faces; attractive people tend to have a better social status, are more reproductively successful and have better sex lives—particularly beautiful women."

Navdeep Sharma, a 36-year-old Delhi marketing executive, always felt that his broad nose didn't suit his face, and remarks from family and friends only aggravated his self-consciousness. After researching on the Internet, Sharma went in for a ₹50,000 rhinoplasty last year. He experienced pain for a month and the swelling took six months to recede. But Sharma is extremely satisfied with the final result. "I did not do it for compliments. I did this for myself. It has boosted my confidence," he says. In a profession where looks and personality count, he feels his new image has made a difference. Meanwhile, every story does not have a happy ending. A survey by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery has found that up to 15 percent of patients need corrective follow-up surgeries after a rhinoplasty.



cially banned production of the drug in 2006.

The psychological health of cosmetic-surgery patients has also gone under the scanner recently. A 2004 University of Pennsylvania, USA, comparison of cosmetic-surgery patients with those undergoing general surgery found that 19 percent of the cosmetic-surgery recipients had mental-health histories, and 18 percent were taking psychiatric medications, compared

The French company Poly Implant Prothèse (PIP), once ranked as the world's No. 3 maker of silicone breast implants, shut down in 2010 after exceptionally high rupture rates of its implants were reported in France. For a decade, PIP had been using industrial grade, rather than medical grade, silicone gel. Since 80 percent of their toxic implant material has been exported, there may be up to 400,000 potential victims all over the world today.

Or consider the tragic fate of thousands of women in China, who now suffer serious side effects after receiving injections of "Ao Mei Ding" or "man-made fat," a liquid gel used in beauty parlours for breast enhancement. In serious cases, these women have had their breasts removed in order to expel the liquid. After numerous consumer complaints, China's State Food and Drug Administration offi-

to five percent of non-cosmetic patients. In Canada, at the University of British Columbia's Perfectionism and Psychopathology Lab (where perfectionism is classified as a maladaptive personality trait associated with crippling social and personal problems that can even lead to suicide) one recent study found that 79 percent of "extreme perfectionists" had had cosmetic surgery.

"Psychiatric evaluation is important, especially in severe body dysmorphic disorder—an obsessive preoccupation with a perceived physical-features defect—where a person may make repeated requests for unwarranted cosmetic procedures. It is also a legal requirement for sex-change operations, in conditions such as gender identity disorder, " says Dr Roshan Jain, senior consultant psychiatrist at Apollo Hospitals, Bangalore. "Many individuals

12 Things Your Cosmetic Surgeon Won't Tell You

1. I may not be skilled with a knife. Any doctor can set up in business as a cosmetic surgeon. If you'd rather not be a guinea pig, find one who's a member of Association of Plastic Surgeons of India (APSI).

2. Breast enhancement too has risks. Fillers and implants are classed as devices, so they don't undergo clinical trials. Safety standards may not be satisfactory.

3. Come back in 2025. Breast implants need replacing every 12 to 15 years, which means four operations in a lifetime if you have them at 20. And though a facelift will always make you look younger, you'll need another in ten years—the lifetime maximum is three.

4. If you're cut, you'll scar. I'll do my best to hide scars, but I can't stop them showing up. They're more likely to be visible if you're fair-skinned. Long scars can be a problem for anyone when loose skin is removed.

5. Over 50? Swap needles for knives. Most patients don't go near an operating table because they rely on injectables to freeze muscles and fill out their face. But only a facelift will help once the muscles start to sag.

6. Ops with maximum "ouch" factor include tummy tuck (abdominoplasty), breast implants under the muscle and brow lift, which stretches the nerves. But full facelifts, nose reshaping and breast reduction are less painful than you'd think.

7. Moob jobs can be avoided. Breast reduction for men is now gaining popularity, but there's an alternative. They could work out at a gym and save themselves a fortune.

8. Forget the lunchtime lift. The only safe thing to have cut in your lunch hour is your hair. Bruises take a fortnight to fade and wounds can take weeks to heal, so don't expect to go back to work in a few days.

9. A clinic is a place, not a person. Choose a specialist by name so you can discuss treatment with your surgeon, not someone at the clinic eager to "close the sale."

10. Injecting Botox into an orange is sometimes all the training technicians get, and I can't supervise if I'm based far away. Go to a surgeon whom you can meet again and again, if needed.

11. I can't turn you into Aishwarya or Shah Rukh. I should be turning one in three patients away because I can't meet their expectations.

12. Your scalpel safari could last longer than you think. If you're going to another city for the surgery, ask them what it will cost and who'll step in if your implants go pear-shaped. *Linda Grey,* with additions

may be seeking surgical solutions for deep-seated psychological problems. The root cause of some of these problems can be neglected or discontinuous upbringing, or even sexual or physical abuse. This can impair development of the self, of identity and lead to a sense of inadequacy. Abuse can also be as simple as a plump kid being bullied in school—which can cause an enormous dent in self-esteem."

Increasing cultural fixation with youthfulness as well as exposure to idealized representations of beauty, too, create distorted perceptions in people, what with growing media

emphasis on slimmer bodies or fairer skin. "Notions of going size-zero are promoted all over," adds Dr Jain. "Our idea of good appearance is often ill-perceived."

A dangerous addiction

Indeed, for many, cosmetic surgery can become addictive. A young woman in her mid-twenties, who had been physically and sexually abused as a child, was referred to Dr Jain by a cosmetic surgeon. She kept going back to the surgeon for various procedures. First, she requested hymenoplasty. She then came back for a septoplasty, done to straighten the nasal septum. She also kept requesting other facial procedures.

"After counselling her, it became apparent that she misperceived being abused for her "ugly looks" and perhaps was seeking a closure to her past, surgically," says Dr Jain. "She needed long-term exploratory psychotherapy more than surgery."

Because of all this, the best cosmetic surgeons are careful while accepting patients. Dr Murarka recalls a handsome male model in his twenties, who had come to him for a rhinoplasty. "He was delighted with the result," says Dr Murarka, "and then asked for surgery on his chin and chest. We had to turn him down."

Dr S. Raja Sabapathy, immediate past president of the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India (APSI), who is also head of plastic surgery at Coimbatore's Ganga Hospital, opines that 70 percent of men coming for aesthetic procedures need psychological evaluation because even after the surgery, the original problem of inadequacy remains unsolved. "They blame their failures in professional life on their looks, which may not always be true," he says.

"What makes cosmetic surgery different from other surgeries is the fact that there is nothing medically wrong with the patient's body in the first place. It only involves improvising on what is already fine," explains Dr Murarka. "In fact there are cases of doctors being sued after surgery by patients who came with unrealistic expectations."

But even if a reputable cosmetic surgeon rejects a dubious case, the patient may go elsewhere for the fix. Anyone with a medical degree—even if he has not specialized in plastic surgery—can do cosmetic procedures in India. Even nurses and beauticians do less invasive treatments, such as using injectables and "anti-aging" treatments. The bottom line is buyer beware!

"It is mandatory for all APSI members to have done a structured course in plastic surgery from a recognized university or medical centre and obtained an MCh or DNB," says Dr Sabapathy. "However, this does not deter patients from approaching unqualified or underqualified doctors who stand to gain in such a situation."

Take your call

Any surgery is risky and unnecessary cosmetic surgeries are no exception. Consider the recent case of comedian Vivek Shauq, 47, who was in TV's *Flop*

Show. A heart patient, Shauq had undergone an angioplasty in 2003 and was on blood-thinning medicines, which he discontinued before a liposuction operation in early January 2011. Hours after this fat reducing procedure, Shauq's situation became critical. The liposuction triggered a cardiac arrest that killed him.

Cosmetic surgery certainly requires patients to be courageous enough to endure the pain and trouble that follow. But it also takes a certain courage to choose not to modify your appearance. "Cosmetic surgery is a quick fix to the natural process of aging and the pace of aging, to a large extent, depends on our lifestyle," says Dr Pratima Rajan of Mumbai's Seven-Hills Health City, and former head of the Department of Preventive and Rehabilitation Medicine at the city's Jaslok Hospital. Dr Rajan, who also runs workshops on what she calls The Art of Healthy Aging, says, "You are what you eat. You can age gracefully by simply choosing to live and eat a healthy diet. Processes lead to further processes and the after-effects could lead to inflammation, infections, injury, numbness in the operated body part as well as permanent scarring."

Conditioned by the media or by people we admire, every era sets its standards of beauty. "It all begins in the mind," says Dr Rajan. "We must learn to love ourselves for what we are."

LET'S GET THIS RIGHT

From a letter to the UK newspaper, *Ealing Gazette*:

"Dear Sirs,

My personal ad in [your paper] has appeared with a most serious, troublesome and embarrassing error. Instead of commencing "Tall, hairy man, widowed," it commenced "To all hairy men, widowed." It thus reads as if placed by a female advertiser.

As a result of this, I am being continuously swamped by incoming phone calls. On Friday I received 181. On Saturday, 280. Most callers hung up when they heard a man's voice, but the callers I did speak to all confirmed that they were [expecting] to speak to a woman. My own friends have been unable to get through to me and I must just hope that they do not form the impression that I am masquerading as a female prostitute.

I suggest that you try to reduce the damage done to me by publishing the following, at no charge, in [your] next two issues:

"TALL, HAIRY MAN, widowed, 65, non-smoker, car, swims daily, discreet, seeks a slave under 27 for lasting relationship. Phone [xxxxxx] or to write to box [xx]—Sorry about the misprint on 16 November."

The Art of Concentration

Ever struggle to keep your attention focused? These simple steps will not only help you focus your mind better—they might just have a profound effect on your whole life

BY HARRIET GRIFFEY





ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID HUMPHRIES

YOUR ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE HAS A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON THE EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH YOU DO ANYTHING, even on the way you view and live your life. But it's a skill we seem to be losing. In the 21st century our 24/7 lifestyle enables—and expects—us to multitask constantly, to try to achieve more and more. Yet a 2005 study at the London Institute of Psychiatry found that office workers distracted by e-mails and phone calls saw their IQ effectively drop by ten points, twice the impact of smoking marijuana.

Even our urban environment inhibits us. A study at the University of Michigan last year found that subjects who had walked through the city (or just looked at pictures of city scenes) scored lower in tests on attention and memory. In fact, this state of agitated distraction may even be physically harmful. Dr Dharma Singh Khalsa of the Alzheimer's Research Centre in Tucson, USA, believes that the stress hormone cortisol is a factor in brain degeneration.

But the good news is that you can change this; the brain continues to



be "plastic" all your life. You can decide to improve your concentration—and current research suggests that in so doing you actually stimulate the growth of new brain cells.

What's stopping you from concentrating?

DISTRACTION This can be both internal (such as the voice in your head or just daydreaming) and external: the phone, other people, noises in the street. Tests on monkeys show that consciously trying to focus on one thing and being distracted by something else actually involves different parts of the brain. The latter is a reflex, while the former is more of a deliberate, learnt application.

Try this: One way of training yourself to focus is the Stop! method. Whenever you feel a stray thought encroaching on your concentration, say "Stop!" to bring your attention back quickly.

PROCRASTINATION How many times have you had two weeks to write a report but left it until the last day? Experts have identified the reasons for it: poor time management, fear of failing, or simply finding the task boring. If this is your problem, you can find some useful pointers at *procrastinus.com*

Try this: Start each day with five minutes' planning—make a list of what needs doing first and include only those things that need to be done that day. Note also the minor tasks such as making a phonecall or paying a bill, so thoughts about them won't distract you.

MULTITASKING You may think you're good at doing several things at once but it could mean that you're not doing any of them very well. Experiments show that by switching between tasks you can end up concentrating on the process of concentrating, rather than the actual tasks themselves. Worse, this constant flipping carries a degree of stress and elevated levels of stress hormones can be harmful.

NEGATIVE THINKING Our brains are programmed for this, born of a primal need to identify threats. But it can be self-defeating if it prevents you from finishing a task. Unhelpful thoughts include the belief that any mistake will spell disaster, that something bad that's happened before is bound to happen again, or confusing the task (and its success or failure) with your own identity.

Try this: Learning to identify negative thoughts can help you recognize them for what they are and push them aside.

What do you need to concentrate?

Most of us find it easy to concentrate on something we find really interesting. For everything else, there are ways to engage our interest.

WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU?

Most people have one of three styles of processing information, which will give you clues as to the best way of working to help concentration:

VISUAL You find it easiest to concentrate on information presented visually—diagrams, illustrations, videos. You probably doodle when on the phone. If this is you:
- Use visual media where possible.
- Take notes, use headings, highlight text in different colours and draw diagrams.
- In a lecture, make sure you can see the speaker's body language and facial expressions.
- When studying, avoid visual distractions.

AUDITORY
You prefer to take in information through sound. Written information may hold little meaning until you hear it spoken, and you interpret tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. You may be a good musician or mimic. If this is you:
- Use a tape recorder instead of notes.
- Read text aloud to yourself.
- Discuss your ideas with others.
- Dictate to someone while they write it down.
- Make up jingles and mnemonics as a memory aid.

TACTILE
You concentrate best through a hands-on approach. You need to experience something to focus on it and probably have good spatial abilities. If this is you:
- Stand up to work.
- Move around while concentrating on new things; read books while on an exercise bike. Use models to work out ideas.
- Concentrate in bursts, taking frequent breaks.
- Skim-read before reading in detail.

LARK OR OWL?
We are all "diurnal" mammals (designed to function during the day, as opposed to the night) but there's a degree of variance, thought to be genetic. "Larks" or "morning people" like to start early, then go to bed early too. "Owls" or "evening people" prefer to start the day later and slower, only really getting going in the afternoon and then carrying on into the night. Whichever you are, it makes sense to perform tasks that require concentration at times of the day that work best for you.

FAMILIARITY VS. NOVELTY While something that's too familiar may be boring, something that's unknown to you, new or too far out of our experience is just unmanageable. Pitch your tasks at the edge of your competence—familiar enough that you can get a handle on them, but challenging enough to engage your interest.

MOTIVATION Just about every adult I've met who loves skiing tells me they hated it at first. What kept them going? It might be wanting to master the sport, being able to do it with their partner, enjoying the ambience, or competitiveness. Understanding what motivates you and what might motivate you for a spe-

cific task can improve your concentration. Consider breaking a task into short-term goals and allow yourself rewards for meeting them.

ENTHUSIASM Think about something you're enthusiastic about and ask yourself why. One key is context: nothing can be interesting without some information to give you a perspective. Watching the first five minutes of one episode of a TV soap isn't very interesting because you don't know the characters, but stick with it and you'll get a context with which to connect. In giving information meaning like this, you'll also start to engage your long-term memory as well as your short-term, which involves different parts of the brain.

Try this: Sam Horn, author of *Conzentrate: Get Focused and Pay Attention* (St Martin's Griffin), identifies the "Five More Rule." If you're tempted to give up on a task, just do five more—read five more pages, finish five more maths problems, work five more minutes. Just as athletes build stamina by pushing themselves past the point of exhaustion, you can stretch your attention span too.

Techniques for concentrating

PREPARE Warming up to your task increases your chances of success. Rather than crashing into bed late the night before, then rushing out the door in ten minutes flat to arrive late at your workplace, get a good night's sleep and rise early enough to have breakfast. Then take some exercise—even just walking for 20 minutes—before or on the way to work. Actively making "time out" between home and work creates an excellent space for thinking.

ORGANIZE Start with the task you know requires the most concentration. You should be able to focus on this for up to 90 minutes, after which you'll benefit from a break. Allowing enough time for the task is important, because it can take your brain up to 20 minutes to "reboot" each time you break off and come back. When you've completed all you can, review what you've done, work out where you'll pick up again and make a note of the next steps you need to take.

Approaching work in an organized way—taking notes, creating mnemonics, asking questions—will also train your mind to receive information in an enquiring and engaged way for future tasks, even when you aren't making physical notes.

KNOW YOUR PURPOSE If you know where you're going with a project, you're much more likely to stay focused. If you have a big task to do, start by breaking it down into sections or stages.

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS A study by IT company Hewlett-Packard found that 62 percent of British adults were addicted to e-mail, checking messages during meetings, after hours,

even on holiday. It's been argued that there's a lot in common between these e-mail users and gambling addicts—they get a reward only sometimes, but the chance of getting a reward keeps them going back.

LIGHT UP Good lighting aids concentration and full-spectrum light has been shown to be particularly helpful—it mimics daylight and inhibits the production of melatonin, a brain chemical that signals it's time for sleep.

- Allocate time to answer e-mails, but don't interrupt another job to do so. If you have an e-mail alert noise, switch it off.
- When you read an e-mail, deal with it immediately—answer, file or delete.
- Unless you need a reply, put "FYI only—no reply necessary" at the end of your e-mail and encourage others to do the same.
- Unsubscribe to unsolicited mail.

VISUALIZE "I never hit a shot, not even in practice, without having a very sharp in-focus picture in my head," says championship golfer Jack Nicklaus. You too may find that envisaging your desired outcome helps you concentrate. Another strategy is to be consciously aware of times when you did really concentrate—not necessarily when working but maybe listening to music or doing a crossword puzzle. What did it feel like? Try visualizing that same sensation.

LISTEN Active listening is different from just hearing. When listening to someone, look at them, make mental notes of the key points as you listen and make affirmative movements to acknowledge you're listening. You should be able to repeat back in your own words the gist of what's said.

Oddly, which ear you use can also be a factor. We naturally tend to favour one or the other when, say, using the phone, but there's evidence that the right ear is better for concentrating because it connects directly to the left brain, the side that processes language. Right-ear-dominant people do seem to find learning easier.

RELAX Fatigue is the enemy of concentration. Moreover, some leisure activities can actively promote your ability to focus. In the 1970s Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, professor of psychology and education at the Claremont Graduate University in the US, made a study of what he called "flow"—"being completely involved in an activity for its own sake." It's what athletes call being "in the zone," the holy grail of concentration. He found that it can be experienced when we relax, too: those who played sports and games experienced it 44 percent of the time, those who engaged in hobbies 34 percent and those who watched TV, 13 percent. So not only can relaxation give you important downtime but it can also help you learn to concentrate better. ■

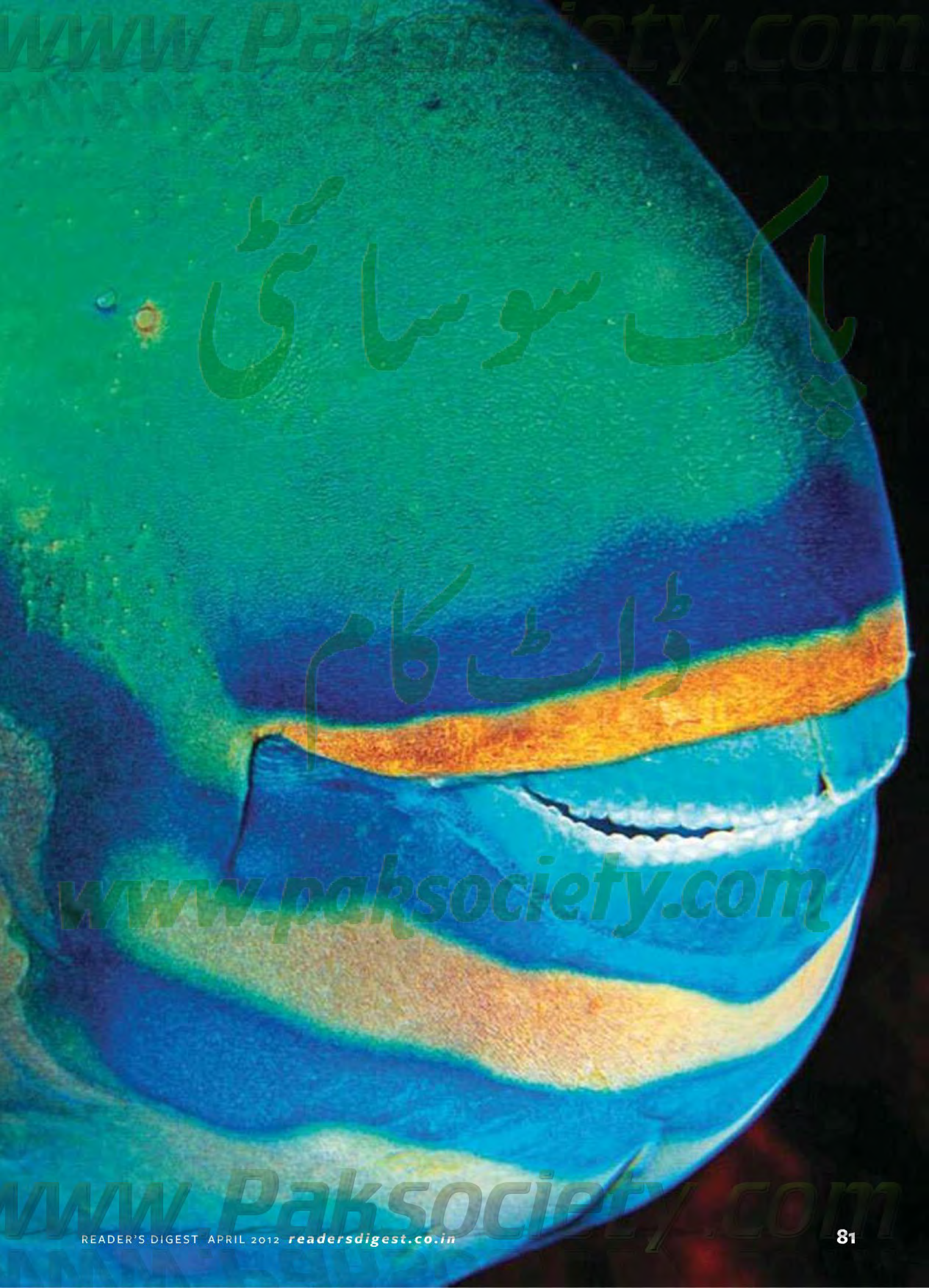
Look>>

SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY

<< Twice

Behind the bridled, or sixband, parrotfish's clownish grin is a serious purpose. The fish uses these tough, grinding choppers to scrape algae from rock. Widely found in tropical Indian Ocean and Pacific waters, bridled parrotfish —*Scarus frenatus*—usually inhabit outer coral reefs, and sometimes graze in very shallow water. Their feeding benefits the reef: algae can smother corals if their growth isn't checked.

PHOTOS : © DAVID DOUBLET; © GARY BELL



Quotes

Failure is just another way to learn how to do something right. *Marian Wright*

One great thing I noticed about living by myself: All of my annoying habits seemed to have disappeared. *Merrill Markoe*

When a speaker says: "I'll be brief," chances are his speech will last two more hours. *Enrique Jardiel Poncela*, *The Book of Convalescent*

Pretending is a very valuable life skill. *Meryl Streep*

Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good. *Malcolm Gladwell*

Children tend to imitate their parents, despite their teachers' attempts to teach them good manners. *Aldo Cammarota*, *The New Province* (Argentina)

One can go to war alone, but you can't build peace alone. *Jacques Chirac*

No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously. *Dave Barry*, *Dave Barry Turns 50* (Crown)

Great music is as much about the space between the notes as it is about the notes themselves. *Sting*

I never liked anyone who didn't have a temper. If you don't have any temper, you don't have any passion. *Michael Bloomberg* on the TV show 20/20

There are moments when tribulations occur in our lives and we cannot avoid them. They occur, however, for a reason. Only when we overcome them do we understand why they happened. *Paulo Coelho*, *The Fifth Mountain*

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT RISKO

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Off Base

HUMOUR IN UNIFORM

When my brother-in-law was promoted to colonel, my sister said she'd now have to get used to her friends calling her a C-O-W.

"Why?" I asked her.

"I'm the Commanding Officer's Wife."

Petula DeSouza, Pune



"Oh this... it's just my e-mail password."

As I guided an elderly safety inspector on a trip around an oil rig out at sea, I invited him to take the helm. "Turn to port," I said, adding, "that's left to you. Now, turn starboard—that means right." Having circled the rig, I joked, "Now, give the boat back to the driver." As he did so, I asked him about his career.

"Navy," he said. "Twenty years. Submarines. And I was the driver."

Bruce Millar

When I worked in the Air Force Satellite Control Facility, we held regular status briefings for department heads. One time, a young officer concluded the weather briefing with "20 years ago, using manual methods, we could predict the weather only three days in advance. Today, with computers, we can predict the weather 72 hours in advance."

George Kreider, on *weatherblog.abc7news.com*

My son, stationed in Japan, dated a Japanese girl who spoke little English. That didn't faze him until the night she announced, "I have chicken pox."

My son didn't know whether to run or get her to the hospital. Then he noticed her shiver. "You don't have chicken pox," he said. "You have goose bumps."

Nejla Williams Bodine

Get paid! Your anecdote is worth ₹1000. Post it to the Editorial address or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com

ILLUSTRATED BY GOPI BURUGU



Snap happy: From a McBride family album.

Heart of the Family

John McBride lay near death as his loved ones prepared for the inevitable. A timely heart transplant saved his life. Twelve years later his son is given the same diagnosis

BY CHRIS POWELL

PHOTOS: COURTESY MICHAEL MCBRIDE; (BACKGROUND, OPPOSITE) ISTOCKPHOTO

A plot had been set aside, the will signed, the last rites performed by the family priest. On May 6, 1997, all the preparations for John McBride's death were complete. Exactly 68 years, nine months and 15 days earlier he had been born in Toronto, Canada, the last of five children. Now he was in end-stage heart failure. He would need a miracle to survive the night.

Mary, his wife of 30 years, sat by his bedside knitting the afghan blanket she had started when the hospital stays grew more frequent. In John's rare moments of wakefulness they talked—about family and love and such practical things as dwindling health insurance—while the machines monitoring his vital functions beeped and hummed in the background.

An array of drugs had prolonged John's life, but couldn't cure him. In December 1995 he had been diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart muscle that causes the left ventricle—the organ's main pumping chamber—to stretch and enlarge so that it can no longer eject blood

effectively. Profound fatigue and shortness of breath can make even everyday tasks, such as eating a bowl of soup, almost impossible.

An experimental surgery called the Batista procedure, in which part of the left ventricle is cut away, had been attempted six weeks prior in a bid to buy time until a suitable donor heart could be found. The surgery had gone well, but ten days later a heart valve failed and John was back where he started.

With all medical options ostensibly exhausted, doctors were simply trying to make John's final hours more comfortable. A counsellor paid a visit to his room, but quickly determined that John didn't need his services—he had accepted his fate.

ingly not much to gain, but nothing to lose, John agreed.

"I'll see you upstairs in a couple of hours," said Cusimano. John would become Toronto General Hospital's 223rd heart recipient.

North American hospitals began working with older recipients and older donors in the mid-1990s, following pioneering work by the University of California, Los Angeles Heart Transplant Program, the first to develop a so-called "alternate list" that matches older donors and patients.

The justification for the alternate list was easy, says Dr Vivek Rao, current surgical director of heart transplantation at the Toronto General. "Since the donor heart is going

John had thought he was never going to see his home again.

Then suddenly, around 8pm, Dr Robert James Cusimano walked into John's room. "You want a transplant?" asked the heart surgeon. "Yes, I want a transplant," John whispered.

"I think we have one for you," said Cusimano. A heart from a 50-year-old donor had just become available. Organs weren't typically harvested from people older than 40, but it did happen from time to time. And with that came an opportunity doctors were more than happy to grab: giving a too-old recipient a sliver of hope thanks to a too-old heart. With seem-

to go to waste and we're willing to do the transplant in an elderly patient, why not give them the chance?"

Rao says the age of donors and recipients has been climbing over the past decade, a result of increased success with such transplants and a shortage of donors. While an ideal donor heart typically comes from someone under 40, "extended criteria" donors—deemed as such because of a variety of factors, including age—now provide the organs for the majority of transplants.

Leading up to the operation,



Father and son: John and Michael McBride.

Cusimano soothed his patient's nerves, saying he expected the procedure to be relatively straightforward, since he had performed the Batista surgery weeks earlier. The only bump occurred when he cut open John's chest and found that the rib cage had mostly healed, requiring him to make the same cuts again. As he wheeled John into the intensive care unit to recover following the operation, Cusimano flashed Mary a thumbs-up. Mary could detect a steady rhythm coming from the heart monitor. It had been a long time since she had heard that sound.

The transplant a success, John was released from the hospital three weeks later. A photograph of the homecoming shows him in a wheelchair, worn out but happy, surrounded by family. He was considerably weaker and down to 59 kilos from 88, but he was alive. John had thought he was never going to see his home again.

He never found out any information about the donor other than age and gender, but every five years, on the anniversary of his transplant—his "re-birthday," he calls it—John sends a letter to the donor's family through the hospital. "I owe my good luck—my life—to my donor and the program."

The McBrides' story had all the makings of a fairy-tale ending. But on December 12, 2009—12 years, four grandchildren and an estimated 475 million heartbeats later—John's "new" organ faced yet another challenge, one for which advanced medicine has yet to find a cure: heartbreak.

John and Mary's only son, Michael, then 41, was getting ready to host a Christmas party at his Greater Toronto home. He'd been feeling under the weather, but chalked it up to aging.

At around 4pm, after lugging a case of beer up from the basement, Michael was overcome by fatigue. He told his wife, Anne, that he was going to lie down. When she came to get him a couple of hours later he couldn't get out of bed. Anne's sister, a nurse, who was at the house, listened to Michael's heart. Its resting rate was approximately 130 beats a minute, well above the average adult range of 60 to 100 beats. Michael was suffering from tachycardia, an acceleration of the heart rate that can be life-threatening if not treated promptly.

Michael went to the emergency room at a nearby hospital for treatment. A follow-up echocardiogram two days later confirmed the family's worst fears: dilated cardiomyopathy. John, in particular, was reeling: "We knew immediately what was ahead for him. And usually what's ahead is that you die."

The odds of Michael being diagnosed with this serious heart problem were significant. Several men on John's mother's side had died in their 40s, arguably due to cardiac issues. John's nephew, Brian Conway, is a heart-transplant recipient and Brian's 27-year-old son, Ryan, has been diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy.

Studies have found that genetic transmission can account for 20 to 35 percent of all cases of dilated cardiomyopathy. Scientists at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital have examined John's blood and sent samples to research facilities all over the world in an attempt to identify the faulty gene behind the condition, but no headway has been made.

John couldn't help but blame himself for the possibly fatal fix Michael was in. "It obviously was hereditary," he says, "and I gave it to him."

Michael left his job as a mortgage salesman immediately after the diagnosis. He soon found himself exhausted just walking down stairs and often slept for as much as 20 hours a day. There was no attempt to hide his condition from his two children, but Michael fretted that he would pass on the illness.

The McBrides mobilized once again. Michael's relationship with his father had deepened during John's health crisis and now the two men spoke almost daily. But even as John attempted to assuage Michael's fears, he knew better than anybody that the situation was dire.

Michael's heart was irreparably damaged, but getting on a transplant list in no way guaranteed survival. "About a quarter of all people on the transplant list die before ever receiving a new heart," says Dr Heather Ross, medical director of Toronto General's cardiac transplant program and deputy director of the hospital's multi-organ transplant program. A 2010 report by the Canadian Organ Replacement Registry states that 258 out of the 1158 people on the heart-transplant list, between 2000 and 2009, died while waiting.

Many people die while on the

The hurdles to a transplant match are tremendous. Not only do doctors require a matching blood type but donor hearts must also come from a person of similar size—the heart of a five-foot-four person simply wouldn't function as effectively in the body of a six-foot-four person. Also taken into consideration is a patient's

transplant status, with the most ill given priority. If there is a match of all three criteria, preference is given to whoever has been on the transplant list the longest.

Like his father, Michael turned out to be one of the lucky ones.

It is late November 2011, a little more than a year since Michael became his family's third heart-transplant recipient, after spending two months on the list. The Christmas tree is already up, stockings hung on the fireplace. A radio plays softly in the background. On a bookshelf sits a framed photo taken by a member of Michael's ten-person surgical team—led, coincidently, by Dr Robert James Cusimano, the same surgeon who had performed his father's transplant more than a decade earlier. It shows Michael's diseased heart, crimson-red and engorged, lying beside its smaller, healthier replacement.

There have been slight setbacks (three rejections, all of them minor) and serious crises (a nasty viral infection that led to an even nastier bacterial infection, requiring hospitalization). For the most part, though, Michael is making a strong recovery. Increased blood flow from the new heart means his fingers and toes no longer feel like icicles, and he finds himself relishing the small things: drawing a decent breath, finishing a meal with ease. While he still requires a one-and-a-half to two-hour nap most days, Michael generally feels great and, at times, even "fantastic."

When Michael was first diagnosed the hospital had offered to provide him with a mentor who could help him cope. He declined. "I looked to my dad," says Michael. "Most people really don't know what to expect. I had a good idea of what was going to happen along the way." His father's experience made him optimistic that everything would work out for the best, yet simultaneously fearful of what appeared to be a long—and life-threatening—journey.

waiting list for a new heart.

A few months prior to the transplant, Michael had indulged his childhood love of *Star Wars* by purchasing a precise replica of the distinctive white armour worn by the film's iconic Stormtroopers. Today Michael pulls out the costume, which he keeps in a small basement room filled with carefully stored memorabilia—everything from antique pistols and rifles from the First and Second World Wars to uniforms worn by Allied forces.

The show-and-tell session complete, Michael effortlessly climbs the stairs back to the house's main level. A devout student of military history, he appreciates the incredible effort—not to mention good fortune—involved in winning a seemingly unwinnable battle. ■



Life in the Plex



A behind-the-scenes glimpse into work—and play—at the giant Internet search company

BY ROBERT KIENER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WILLIAM MERCER MCLEOD

It's just after 9am and I'm standing outside the Silicon Valley headquarters of Google, the hugely successful US Internet search company whose name has entered the international lexicon. Most people don't "search" the Internet, they "google" it.

Under an impossibly blue California sky, I watch hundreds of "Googlers," as the company's employees are known, stream into the 26-acre Googleplex, a collection of low-rise, landscaped office buildings. T-shirts are big here. Many people have backpacks, others carry computer notebooks tucked under their arms or even open in front of them. Some tote bags of dirty laundry. (More on that later.)

I've been invited by Google management to the Googleplex for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look into this highly secretive operation. Google has promised me unprecedented access to its facilities and employees. I'm hoping to prove or disprove some widely held beliefs—and rumours—about this company that in 13 years has grown from a tiny Internet search startup to a multinational colossus that employs more than 32,000 people in 60 offices around the world.

For example, does Google know everything about us by how we search the Internet? Should we care? Do Googlers spend most of their time skateboarding around their offices, shooting pool or playing practical jokes on one another? Aren't most Googlers 20-something millionaires? Do they even hire anyone older than 30? And is Google, which made nearly $38 billion in revenue in 2011, about to take over the world?



"We like to combine fun with business. It's called being '**Googley**'."

—Cliff Redeker, Google "Impresario"

To explore the sprawling Googleplex I jump on one of the hundreds of bicycles that are left around the campus for employees to use. I ride along with Cliff Redeker, 28, the company's "Impresario," who organizes the visits of celebrity speakers to the Googleplex. As we pedal the trademark blue, red, yellow and green bikes past glistening glass and steel



Beyond the reception desk a slide curves down from the floor above, a quirky alternative to stairs.

buildings, Redeker tells me, "We like to combine fun with business. It's called being 'Googley'."

As we park our bikes outside Building 43, I spot a Googler wearing old jeans and a polo shirt dashing up the steps with a guitar sticking out of his backpack. When I tell Redeker that's not something you'd see at many other companies, he tells me, "That's our CFO, Patrick Pichette. We are casual at Google."

Indeed, how many other companies have a corporate philosophy that notes, "You can be serious without a suit?" As I learn quickly at Google, it's a cardinal sin to take oneself too seriously.

After passing through Building 43's security check, we bump into Wanda Hung, who works in the Search department. She's accompanied by her four-year-old-dog Lily, a striking white-haired Samoyed. "She's been coming to work with me since she was four months old," says Hung. "She loves it here. So do I."

Redeker and I walk on. A Googler wearing roller blades and clutching a notebook zips by us. I meet several workers who have ditched their office chairs to sit on giant, inflatable exercise balls. At a snack bar that offers everything from organic yogurt to freshly roasted coffee to energy bars (all free), Redeker tells me that Google co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page wanted employees to feel free to snack whenever they got the urge. "They dictated that no Googler should be more than 150 feet away from a micro-kitchen," he tells me. There are more than 150 micro-kitchens in the Googleplex.



From top: **Nerf guns are a favourite diversion of Googlers, including software engineer Chris Elliott; Martin Buhr, who works in sales, brings his dog to work; (*left to right*) ads policy specialist Suneeti Vakharia and policy manager Rekha Rao meet at a bowling alley.**



Food, all free, is a big deal at Google. There are 25 cafes, including 11 gourmet restaurants, that serve everything from fried calamari with Chinese sausage to rack of lamb to vegetarian you-name-it, at a reported annual cost to Google of more than $70 million. New staff report having to cope with what's called the "Google 15." Says Redeker, "That's the 15 pounds [6.8 kilos] they put on after they start working here." No worry; they can then head to one of the firm's six free gyms to work it off.

And those laundry bags I saw? "We have washing machines and dryers here so employees can do their laundry while they work," says Redeker.

Back on our bikes Redeker laughs when I ask him if the rumours about so many Googlers becoming millionaires are true. "I wish!" he says. "Many of the early employees became millionaires when the company went public but things are different now." Salaries are a closely guarded secret but new hires can easily earn more than US$100,000.

Okay, but aren't all new hires in their twenties? "That's another misconception," says Yolanda Mangolini, a director within People Ops (human resources) as we sit at a quirky playground-type bench inside her department. "We hire lots of people in their thirties, forties and older." Although Google doesn't release information on the age of workers, the average appears to be the mid-thirties. Mangolini and her team receive a

staggering two million résumés a year, all competing for roughly 8000 positions. Less than one percent of the applicants will get hired.

When I ask her about all the employee perks, such as the free food, the company lounges, the ubiquitous table football and pool tables, she confesses that there is a method to Google's madness. What looks to an outsider like "playtime" is often much more serious. "All of these things make Googlers' working lives easier and fun but they also promote collaboration," she explains. "There's very little hierarchy here and we encourage cross-fertilization."

She reminds me that the engineers I may have seen playing ping-pong or volleyball were probably also talking over their latest project. "It's one of the ways we get things done here."

Another novel Google concept is "20 Percent Time." Says Mangolini, "Sergey and Larry want all Googlers to devote 20 percent of their time to work on any project they are interested in." She notes that such products as Gmail, Google's wildly successful e-mail system, Google News and others were developed during Googlers' 20 percent time.

One of the company's shining stars is Jack Menzel, director of Product Management at Google Search. He's part of the team that is continually refining Google's complex search operations. As we sit in a third-floor conference room he attempts to explain to me what happens when someone types a search query into Google's search engine. I say, "attempt" because Menzel is so bright and the process is so complicated that I can barely understand what he is saying.



"Why don't you pretend you're explaining this to a 10-year-old, Jack?" I ask. It doesn't help much. Finally, he just types my name into the search engine. In less than a second, .22 of a second to be exact, Google produces "about 3460" results, each of which contains my exact name.

"It's remarkable, isn't it," says the bright-

eyed, bespectacled Menzel, "Sometimes it even blows my mind!"

The company's worldwide network of computer servers is constantly "crawling" the billions of pages that make up the Internet to help build its own "representation" of the Internet. Menzel asks me to imagine the Internet is a vast library. "Every time it adds a book, we record it—as well as everything that's inside that book. Then we scan it for your name." Again, his eyes light up. "It's mind boggling, isn't it?"

> **"Don't Be Evil,"** is one of the company's mottos. "We take that very seriously."
>
> *—Jack Menzel, Google Search*

"Now, what's equally amazing is that we also give you those results according to how relevant we think they are to you. And we do all that in less than a quarter of a second!" Page rankings are derived from more than 200 different signals, which can include the user's past searches; rankings are generated by complex algorithms—software programs that direct the search. These proprietary algorithms are the company's "secret sauce," and are entrusted to only a select few. By perfecting their search engine and matching paid advertisements to users' search results, Google has risen from a revenue-free startup in 1998 to become one of the most profitable companies in the world.

Should we be worried by the vast array of information Google captures about its users? "The reason we keep track of your searches is to keep improving our search process," Menzel tells me. He reminds me of one of the company's informal mottos, "Don't Be Evil," and says, "we take that very seriously."

Not everyone agrees. Google's critics have blasted it for everything from violating antitrust laws to being an unfair competitor to trying to monopolize search processes.

I am finally admitted to the company's usually off-limits, super-secure and highly secretive Security department. "Welcome to 'SecurityLand'," says Ian Fette, product manager with Google's 200-strong Security Team, as he ushers me through double-locked doors into the third-floor offices. "Not many outsiders get in here."

As we walk through the department I see scores of security engineers intently poring over lines of complex computer coding that fill their huge twin monitors. No one looks up; each is a study in concentration. These are some of the world's most accomplished software engineers. They are Google's elite, the first line of defence against hackers, "crackers" and Bad Guys.

Fette and the department's anti-malware and anti-phishing teams do constant battle, protecting Google and its users from a daily barrage of attackers intent on crippling the search engine giant or stealing information from users' accounts. "Protecting our users' data is what keeps me awake at night," says Fette. These offenders range from the proverbial 15-year-old in his pyjamas to sophisticated cyber attacks launched by skilled hackers or even governments.

"We try to keep one step ahead of the attackers. They are constantly evolving and so are we," explains Fette, a Carnegie Mellon computer science graduate who speaks German and Japanese, flies his own plane and once worked for the US Defense Intelligence Agency. "It's the new Cold War."

Last June the Security Team uncovered a sophisticated, China-based attack that hacked into the personal Google e-mail accounts of hundreds of people, including top US officials, military personnel, journalists and Chinese political activists. To cope with such a sophisticated cyber crime, the team declare a "Code Red" and send an elite team of security experts into the department's war room, the nearby Incident Response Area.

As we walk by the room I notice the door's series of locks and signs that read, "Restricted Area," "No Visitors" and "Authorized Googlers Only."

"Any chance I could peek inside?" I ask Fette. "Sure, but then we'd have to kill you." I think he was joking.

Will Google take over the world, as some fear? Unlikely, but part of the corporate vision is to look for "uncomfortably exciting ideas that can change the world," as Larry Page likes to say. After my four-day visit to the Googleplex, news was leaked that the firm's California-based top-secret laboratory, dubbed Google X, is working on such outlandish inventions as an elevator that could transport people into outer space via a cable instead of a rocket, driverless cars, robots that would go to work while their human owners stay home and even more outlandish ideas.

Sound crazy? Those driverless cars are already here; Google introduced the world's first working robot-controlled car in 2010 and it has driven roughly 320,000 kilometres on Nevada's and California's highways since then. As Jack Menzel likes to say, "It's mind boggling, isn't it?"

COLOUR CORRECTION

I was in the Accounts Manager's office when I heard one of his staff have a disagreement with another person on the phone. The conversation became more heated until the man said forcefully, "Look, I've got it in front of me in black and white in red ink!" *Roy Ingram*

¡AY AY AY AY! MA



KENNETH MILLER GOES OUT AND FINDS...



RIACHI!

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ABELARDO OJEDA

At 6:00 on a Saturday evening, Plaza Garibaldi is just emerging from its slumber. In the waning light, the place isn't much to look at. Century-old buildings surround the square, their plaster dulled with soot. They house *taquerias*, souvenir stalls, and well-worn nightclubs. Musicians lurk everywhere, calling out *Una cancioncita?*—a short song?—to the few passers-by. There are no takers. The nightly magic has not yet descended on Mexico City's foremost shrine to song.

Inside a mustard-coloured cantina called the Salon Tenampa—the plaza's Holy of Holies—the bar is nearly empty. Upstairs, in the vast yellow dining room, barely half-a-dozen tables are occupied. Here, though, the magic is beginning to take hold.

In one corner, four generations have gathered for a great-grandmother's birthday; the ancient woman, with long grey braids, sits placidly sipping cerveza from the bottle. Nearby, a couple in their 50s are celebrating a reunion with their two grown daughters and two small grandchildren. The plump matriarch calls over a group of mariachis, resplendent in their tight suits with bright silver buttons. She makes a request.

The mariachis launch into "Urge," a ballad of ungovernable passion, followed by the sentimental weeper "Hermoso Cariño." At first, the whole family sings along. By the fifth ode to glorious or doomed or unrequited love, however, it's mainly a duet between the prettier, childless daughter and the band's handsome, moustached vocalist, their eyes locked in tender understanding. Seven songs, eight—the mariachis honour each request without hesitation, drawing on a repertoire honed over decades.

The singer, Jorge Gamboa, is the youngest in the group at 50; the leader and *guitarrùn* player, Francisco Carreùn, is 85. A tiny man with tobacco-hued skin, he handles his oversized bass guitar as easily as an ant carrying a giant leaf.

There are six other band members clustered around the booth, all of them seasoned veterans—the guitarist, the guy who plays *vihuela* (a round-backed rhythm guitar), two trumpeters and two violinists. The senior



fiddler, Gabriel Esparza, is 82, with an aquiline face out of an El Greco painting. He suffers from Parkinson's disease, and he's happy to be standing in one place for a bit. But after the tenth song, the pretty daughter hands over a wad of cash and it's time to move on.

Gabriel remembers his own father, a dirt-poor mariachi in Guadalajara, warning him not to follow in his footsteps. He does a quick calculation: at 120 pesos per song (the Tenampa's set rate), each of the eight band members has just earned 150 pesos—just over $10—for a half-hour's work. *I've done all right, Daddy,* he thinks. Then he hobbles after his colleagues to enchant the great-grandma's table.

Many things have changed in Mexico since Gabriel was a boy, but devotion to mariachi music—for listeners as well as players—is still passed down as a blood inheritance. For the faithful, Plaza Garibaldi functions as a pilgrimage spot. The pilgrims show up every evening, but the throngs are thickest on a Saturday.

It's 8pm now, and darkness has fallen. At least two dozen bands have



In the Plaza Garibaldi, mariachis bring the night to life with their well-loved music.

staked out portions of the square, each surrounded by a knot of fans. There are oldsters in wheelchairs and babies in strollers, punk rockers with Mohawks, young professionals in designer eyeglasses, *campesinos* [farm workers] fresh from the countryside and a smattering of unwashed derelicts. Pushcart vendors sell souvenirs, candy, *tamale* (a dough-based dish with meat, cheese and vegetable filling) and *michelada* (a drink made with beer, lemon juice, salt and tequila). The cool air smells of truck exhaust, charcoal smoke and roasting meat.

The musical styles performed here span the whole country. Groups in straw hats and *guayaberas*—tropical-style white linen shirts play the songs of Veracruz, known as jarochos, on harps and *jaranas* (miniature guitars).



Quartets in cowboy hats and fringed leather coats play *norteños* on 12-string *bajos sextos*, accordian and *tarolas* (snare drums). Yet the horns and fiddles of the seven- or eight-man mariachi groups overpower all the other sounds.

The precise origins of mariachi remain unknown, but it developed in western Mexico sometime in the 17th century. It first drew national attention in 1905, when a band from the village of Cocula, Jalisco State, trekked to Mexico City to play at the inauguration of President Porfirio Diaz. In 1925, a Jalisco native opened the Salon Tenampa on Plaza Garibaldi, installing mariachi groups from his home state as the house bands. Since then, the popularity of mariachi music has spread as far as Belgium, Croatia and Japan. Just last November, the UNESCO added mariachi to its "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity."

For all the glamour of early stars like Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete and Lucha Reyes (one of the genre's few female sensations), life for ordinary mariachis remained hardscrabble. Gabriel Esparza's father, a fiddler, could barely support his 11 children on his earnings; on the side, he worked as a barber and a farm labourer. His rural audiences were often drunk and rowdy, and violence was common. Nonetheless, young Gabriel was determined to take up the trade.

He began his professional career at



Opposite page: **Dress and instruments vary. This mariachi is of the "norte" style with cowboy hat and accordion.** ***Above:*** **A busy night inside the Tenampa for (*left to right*) Jaime Gamez, Gabriel Esparza, Jorge Gamboa, and Cesar Coronado.**

age 12, when his dad let him fill in for an ailing band member. Not long afterwards, he witnessed his first murder, when a fiesta erupted in a shootout and knife fight. "This guy ended up with 19 bullet holes," Gabriel recalls during a break between sets. "My father told me, 'Now you understand why I didn't want you to become a mariachi'."

Gabriel has managed to exceed his father's expectations, however. In 1963, when he was 34, he left Guadalajara when a mariachi brother-in-law invited him to Mexico City. Performing at a string of obscure cantinas, Gabriel honed his skills and his reputation; the Salon Tenampa band recruited him in 1986, and he never left. "This is the most peaceful place I've played in," he says. "If somebody even stands up in their chair, a waiter gives him an earful about it."

By 9pm, the action at the Salon Tenampa has shifted to the ground-floor lounge. Gabriel and his mates have competition now—the cantina's other three house bands, newly arrived and taking requests from tables elsewhere in the room. The crowd here is different from the one upstairs: couples on dates, office buddies blowing off steam, a group of


Eduardo Hernandez—the new young breed of mariachi.

young women seeing a friend through a breakup. They all seem to know the words to every song.

Gabriel has been playing for nearly six hours, and his bow hand trembles with exhaustion. At 9:30 he packs up his fiddle and heads home. But the party at the Tenampa continues until 3am, when the place shuts down.

On Sunday afternoon the plaza is mostly dormant, but by 5pm its western boundary is beginning to bustle with commerce. Musicians use this area as a recruiting centre for freelance gigs, known as *chambas*. Cars pull to the curb every minute or so. Many are carrying clients who need a mariachi ensemble—pronto—whether for a party, a wedding, or even a funeral. Contractors rush to greet each arrival, offering to deploy an existing group or assemble one quickly.

Twenty-year-old Eduardo Hernández leans against a car doling out banknotes to a group he put together for a customer's birthday bash. Hernández is the grandson of a mariachi, and he has taken up the old man's vocation. But unlike his violinist grandfather, Eduardo—a trumpeter—plays on Plaza Garibaldi only occasionally. Instead, he focuses on *chambas*, as both a musician and manager of his group. And rather than wait around for clients, he advertises on the Internet.

With his tousled black hair, chiselled cheekbones and artfully ripped jeans, the skinny teen looks more like a rocker than someone who would play rancheras. Over a beer at the Tenampa, he admits that he studied for a time with a music teacher. Yet in other ways, his story is gritty and grounded in family. Raised by a struggling single mother, with three younger sisters, Eduardo dropped out of school two years ago to help support the household.

IF YOU GO

> **Plaza Garibaldi is located** in the historic centre of Mexico City, on Eje Central (Lázaro Cárdenas), a few blocks north of the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

> **The best time to experience the plaza** is on Friday and Saturday nights from 11pm. Yet, at all hours of the day and night, mariachi bands can be found playing here.

> **You can get to the Plaza** by Mexico City Metro to station Metro Garibaldi. But the safest way is to go by taxi. And don't go alone! Plaza Garibaldi is a joyous and colourful slice of the city, but you need to be careful: You can find thieves, indigents and public drunkenness, especially on the side streets.

> **The most popular of the Mariachi songs** are "Cielito Lindo," "El Rey," "El Mariachi Loco," and "México Lindo Y Querido." Cost for a song is from 100 to 120 pesos (₹35 to 45).

He's realistic about the road ahead. "It takes luck, charisma, character and musical talent to make it as a mariachi," he says. "You have to be willing to face adversity. But when you see people clapping and singing and dancing, that's what keeps you going. The money is important, but the music matters most of all."

That spirit, shared by generations of mariachis, may be the real source of the magic that transforms Plaza Garibaldi each evening from an urban eyesore into a place of joy.

It's true that the city government renovated the plaza in 2010, aiming to make it more attractive. Yet the square will never be beautiful in the manner of the capital's better-known landmarks. Plaza Garibaldi can offer only its own rough version of beauty and comfort, the kind found in a song like "*Cielito Lindo*" ("Lovely Little Heaven"). Gabriel Esparza and his band are playing it just now at the Tenampa:

Ay, ay, ay, ay!
Sing and don't cry.
Because singing, *cielito lindo*,
Gladdens hearts.

EYE ON THE PRIZE

I was awakened at 4:30am by a loud, constant chirrup. After a while, annoyed, I slipped on my housecoat, headed to the door and switched on the outside lights. The singing stopped, so I turned off the lights, but seconds later it started again. I peered outside and met a pair of shining eyes glaring at me. The neighbour's cat was stalking our new garden ornament: a motion detector singing robin. *J.K. Rutley*

'Miss Mosquito Net' Goes All The Way for Africa

BY JOS VERSTEEGEN

"Hi, chaps. How are you?" asked the Englishman, smiling broadly as he got out of his Land Rover Defender. Julia Samuël stood speechless for a moment in the oppressive Ghanaian heat. Was this the man people had described as a stiff and surly cuss? And there was more that was remarkable about the six-and-a-half-foot-tall David Robertson: as he climbed out of the SUV she saw that he had just one arm and walked with a prosthetic leg.

MED TILLATELSE FRA JULIA SAMUËL



The passionate Dutch TV star was devoted to fighting malaria—not even cancer could stop Julia Samuël

Samuël, 40, presenter of "The Holy Cow," a Dutch television program about automobiles, was in Ghana with her crew to film a segment on Robertson's SUV. He had traversed Africa in the four-wheel drive vehicle to distribute mosquito nets and medicine for Drive Against Malaria. This man would certainly know a thing or two about the car.

The two hit it off immediately. Between takes, she learned the 40-year-old native of Bedford, England, had lost his right leg and right arm in 1977, at age 18, when he was hit by a drunk driver. During his recovery, he decided to learn about medical care around the world. When he was able, he travelled to three continents and 44 countries. The most widespread and deadly disease he encountered was malaria.

Caused by a parasite transmitted in the bite of the malaria mosquito, the disease is usually fatal if not treated quickly. Each year about one million people, mostly young children, die from it. In India alone, the number of malarial deaths could be as high as 205,000 every year. In 1998, Robertson started Drive Against Malaria.

The stories he told Julia Samuël about Africa were harrowing. "I have met families who have lost seven or eight children to the disease. I have seen hospitals where all they have is paracetamol to 'cure' malaria. Sometimes there's just one hypodermic needle for taking blood."

Julia knew that malaria could be fatal: her father had nearly died of the disease while he interned in a Japanese prison camp in Indonesia during World War II. Two uncles did die. But nowadays there was medicine to treat it. Could things really be so bad?

Julia grew up in Eelde, a town in north Netherlands. She studied child psychology in college and worked in that field briefly before taking a job in 1986 as a television announcer. She became well-known in the Netherlands as anchor woman for the TV/media company Veronica. She then worked on several travel programs before moving to "The Holy Cow."

She persuaded her TV producers to let her go to Ghana to film a report. But now that she had met David and listened to his story, there was no way she could just board a plane and jet off to wherever the next automobile report was to be shot. "David," she said, "I want to make a documentary about you and your work."

A couple of months later, in December 1999, Julia returned to Africa. David, who at that time was in Mali, did not need to drive far to prove to her that the malaria situation was as bad as he had said. In the first village they visited Julia saw a dying child. She thought out loud, "That child is sleeping." But David shook his head and whispered, "The child's in a coma and will die soon." The revelation cut through Julia like a knife. And she was confronted with the same tragic image in one village after another: Victims of malaria at death's door.

It troubled her deeply that the dis-

ease afflicting these people was simple to prevent and cure. Using a mosquito net eliminates most of the risk. But many people were ignorant of this or believed you needed to stay under a net all day (in fact, the mosquito only becomes active at night). Infection can also be avoided by combating the mosquito itself, for example by drying out puddles and other sources of still water or by using insecticides. If you still contract the disease, there is a cure—the artemisinin-based malaria combination therapy (ACT)—that promises a full recovery in three days. Cost: less than a euro.

With her documentary completed, Julia's decision became final: she was going to help David. And her help would be concrete, not just media exposure. Back in the Netherlands, she told her father of her plans. "Julia, it's wonderful that you are going to do this," he replied, "but please be careful." Her father, not an emotional man, had tears in his eyes as he spoke.

JULIA DECIDED HER HELP SHOULD BE MORE CONCRETE, NOT JUST MEDIA EXPOSURE.

Julia went straight to work. She set up the Transparent World Foundation and started raising funds. She learnt how to test people for malaria and how to treat them. With a modest start-up capital of 25,000 guilders [about $15,000 at the time], mostly her own money, she bought mosquito nets and medicine in Switzerland and the Netherlands.

She and David distributed them in Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. They explained what fever is, how to use a thermometer, and that the more a person weighs, the more medicine is required.

There were always problems to deal with. The anti-malaria pills must be taken with water, but if the water isn't clean it has to be boiled. Let the water cool down first—that too was a lesson they sometimes had to teach people.

And so Julia would fly between her work in the Netherlands and Africa. Although working to control malaria gave her great satisfaction, it rankled her that all too often she and David didn't have enough medicines. While this certainly frustrated her it also motivated her to keep returning to Africa.

Thus the greater was the shock when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001. For months already she had felt something odd in her breast when jogging. At first it felt like a bunch of keys swinging about as she ran. Later it developed into an oppressive pain. Once the diagnosis had been made, she found out that there was a waiting list for treatment.



MED TILLATELSE FRA JULIA SAMUËL







Julia Samuël and David Robertson (*top right*) have made it their mission to battle and prevent malaria in Africa. Mosquito nets are their chief weapon.





The emotional blow of this personal drama was considerable. But Julia had not forgotten about Africa. She worried about the people who pinned their hopes on her and David. Each delay in her treatment meant that people in Africa were dying for lack of medicine.

So Julia started phoning hospitals until she found one that could admit her. Her relief proved short-lived, however, after it turned out that she did not have one tumour but two. For Julia it felt as though a dump-truck had tipped a load of mud over her and she thought: *I'm going to drown in this*. It was a feeling that only increased after her surgery. She found it difficult to stay interested in things around her. Her love for classical music seemed to have waned. She cared nothing for the newspapers or television.

DAVID TOLD HER ON THE PHONE: 'YOU SOUND ODD. YOU MAY HAVE MALARIA.'

Her oncologist saw the writing on the wall and said, "If you give up hope we're going to have a very hard time getting you back on your feet. What dream would you still like to see come true?" The answer was short: "Africa." Intrigued, the oncologist, who himself had worked in Africa, asked what she meant. With fiery passion, Julia told him about David Robertson and t heir efforts to combat malaria. His reaction: "In that case, we'll devise a treatment plan that'll have you back in Africa." The oncologist saw the effect his words had on Julia: Her eyes started sparkling again.

A few months later she was at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, and very sick. Deathly white and bloated from the medications, she felt like a whale and thought: *What am I doing?* She planned to work in Cameroon for half a year before returning to the Netherlands for a second round of treatment. Despite that grim prospect, she was relieved to be in Africa again.

In Cameroon she found David in a poor way. He had contracted cerebral malaria, a dangerous strain of the disease that required speedy treatment as it could otherwise kill a person within 24 hours. It was the same fate met by so many of those they had tried to help. Julia's arrival could not have been more opportune, and she helped him get back on his feet.

For a while, her own struggle faded into the background until she needed surgery again for her cancer. The sight of her breast after the operation was a shock: The curvature of her breast was marred by a deep hole. It reminded her of an erupted volcano. Although the recovery was laborious, Julia did not want to sit it out at

home. She would rather die in Africa than languish in Holland and grieve over plans gone awry. She went back to Africa.

Ms Mosquito Net, a nickname she picked up in Cameroon, had found her wings again. She and David travelled from country to country distributing nets. The years flew by. Often they would work until late at night as they did during a campaign in Mozambique in 2005. But it is at night that mosquitoes become active, as they had always told people. One evening, without noticing it, Julia was bitten by a mosquito.

It can take two weeks before the first symptoms appear and Julia was already back in the Netherlands when she started to feel unwell. It was David who, during a telephone call, noticed that her speech sounded odd. "You may have malaria," David suggested. Only then did Julia realize that the fever she had developed had nothing to do with the large temperature difference between Africa and the Netherlands. Like David in Cameroon, she had contracted cerebral malaria.

She was rushed to the hospital where she sank into a coma and received treatment just in time. Even after she was cured of the malaria, she suffered from memory loss and reduced hearing and vision for a while.

"You'll probably never return to Africa," friends said. Her answer was always the same: "When I do get better, I will go. I know better now what it means to have malaria. And there is still so much to do."

Julia's own future remains uncertain. The cancer is gone and she looks well. But there are no guarantees that she will not become sick again. She lives day by day. And she lives for Africa. When David and Julia visited a pygmy village in Cameroon in late 2008, a man brought a baby to them. The baby's mother had been so weakened by the malaria that she died. The baby had also contracted malaria and it was emaciated: sunken cheeks and ribs she could count. Holding the baby boy in her arms, she felt it was almost like holding a dead baby. *This is not going to end well*, she thought.

She and David administered malaria medicines to the little boy, then she sat the baby in her lap and showed the father how to feed it milk from the bottle. "Let the baby have four or five sucks and then wait for it to burp," she told him. "Then continue in the same way until the bottle is empty." She drove home to the father that he had to keep doing this or he'd soon be burying his child next to his wife.

A few months later she and David returned to the village. Someone standing on the road called out: 'Madame Julia!' She recognized the father. He ran over to his hut and came back with the child, who he'd named David. What she saw was a little boy glowing with health and with full cheeks. She held him in her arms, speechless with happiness.



To learn more about Drive Against Malaria, and how you can help, visit *www.driveagainstmalaria.org*

APRIL FOOL'S DAY

BY ALFI LORPOS

From simple pranks such as pasting a "Kick Me" sign on someone's back to more elaborate hoaxes, April 1st is a day where it's acceptable to play a practical joke on your family, neighbours, colleagues, friends and enemies. What are you waiting for?

Fishy story

Although not all April Fool's experts (yes, they exist) agree, some argue the day originated in 16th century France, when Pope Gregory XIII mandated that the new year began on January 1, instead of the end of March. Those who failed to follow the new calendar were dubbed "April fish." Others claim it originated from ancient spring festivals that included mischief-making.

Beep Ben

In 1980 the BBC announced that Big Ben, London's historic clock tower, was going to be replaced with a digital face to keep up with the times. Enraged callers flooded the station with complaints.





"I have great faith in fools— self-confidence, my friends call it."

Edgar Allan Poe

>>Timeline

1508 In France, poet Eloy d'Amerval refers to **poisson d'Avril** (April fish), the French term for April fools.
1539 Flemish writer Eduard de Dene publishes **a comic poem about a nobleman** who sends his servants on "foolish" errands on April 1.
1686 First British mention of "**Fooles holy day**," which is observed on April 1.
1698 One of the earliest of April Fool stunts: people were invited to go to the Tower of London to see the "**annual ceremony of washing the lions**."
1789 An English newspaper claims that April Fool's day had its origins when Noah dispatched a raven from the Ark too early.
1919 Residents of horse-free Venice wake on April 1 to find their famed Piazza San Marco dotted with piles of horse manure.
1993 A German radio station reports Cologne **officials have outlawed joggers running faster than 9.6km per hour** so as not to disturb mating squirrels.
2002 UK supermarket chain Tesco advertises genetically modified "**whistling carrots**." Tapered air holes in their sides cause them to whistle when cooked.
2009 A British newspaper, **the *Guardian*, announces it will only publish stories less than 140 characters long**, via Twitter. Here's how it said it would have covered the invasion of Poland in 1939: "OMG Hitler invades Poland, allies declare war see *tinyurl.com/b5x6e* for more."



1992 Posing as Richard Nixon, impressionist Rich Little announces his candidacy for US president on NPR's *Talk of the Nation*, saying: "I did not do anything wrong, and I promise never to do it again."

Spaghetti harvest causes a stir



When it comes to fooling around, Great Britain is a world leader. Indeed, many believe a BBC TV hoax, broadcast over half a century ago still ranks as the best-ever April Fool's joke. In 1957 the news show *Panorama* reported that, thanks to a mild winter, Swiss farmers enjoyed a bumper spaghetti crop. To prove this, it broadcast a three-minute report of Swiss farmers carefully plucking, or "harvesting," strands of spaghetti from trees. Legions of viewers were duped and many called the BBC wanting to know how they could grow their very own spaghetti tree. The BBC advised each caller: "Place a sprig of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best."

(BACK) THINKSTOCK; (BIG BEN) GETTY IMAGES; (SPAGHETTI) CORBIS

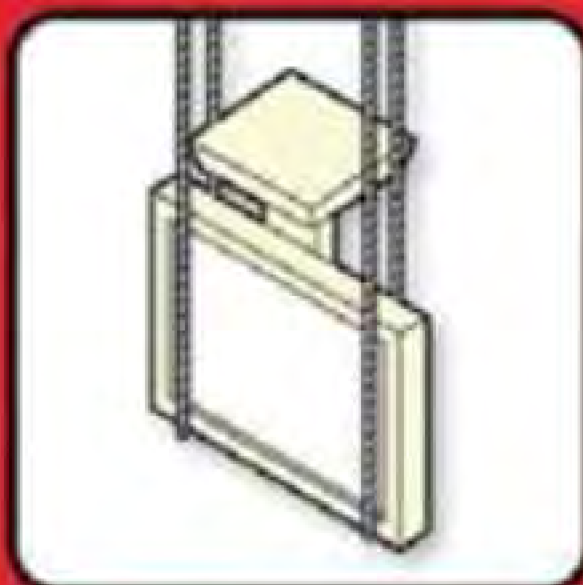




Corporate capers

Reasoning that a well-executed prank can result in valuable publicity, firms such as Google, Microsoft, BMW, Guinness, Virgin and others regularly try to get in on the fun. In 1996 fast-food chain Taco Bell announced it had purchased the famed US Liberty Bell, which it claimed it was renaming the "Taco Liberty Bell" and relocating it from Philadelphia to its headquarters in California. The company claimed publicity from the hoax had led to increased sales of over US$1 million on April 1st and 2nd.

When Google, a chronic hoaxer, launched its Gmail service on 1st April 2004, people assumed it was another hoax. However, when it turned out to be real, the company got the last laugh by receiving yet another round of free publicity.

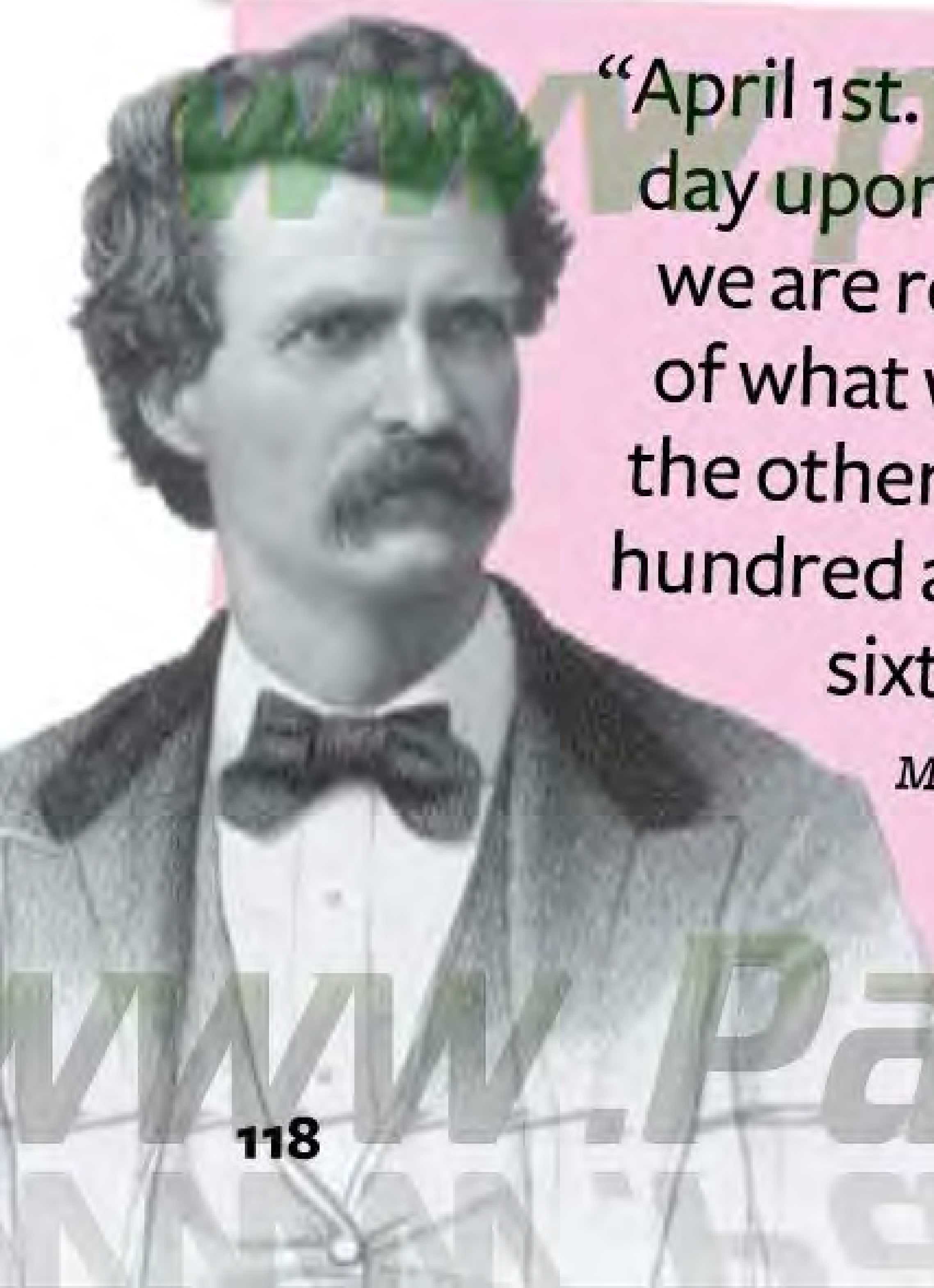




YOUTUBE FLIPS OUT On 1st April 2009, YouTube turned some of its videos upside down. A page on "tips for viewing the new layout" suggested users hang their monitors upside down from the ceiling, although the layout did not reverse mouse-control.

"Here cometh April again, and as far as I can see the world hath more fools in it than ever."

Charles Lamb



"April 1st. This is the day upon which we are reminded of what we are on the other three hundred and sixty-four."

Mark Twain

PRANKS TO PULL

Want to get in on the fun?

>> **Bored at work?** Make a dozen photocopies of a paper clip on a plain white background, and put these in the machine's paper tray so everyone's copy will include a paper clip. Watch your colleagues go crazy trying to find the clip stuck in the copier.

>> **Phone a friend** at work during lunch hour and leave the message to call back any of the following names, and leave a number for the local zoo: Mr C. Lyon; Ms Anna Conda; Mr Don Key, and—an all-time favourite—Mr Behr.

Jokers beware! In one survey, 68% of the executives questioned thought April Fool's pranks were unsuitable for the office.



(TWAIN) GETTY IMAGES; (APE, DOG, BABY, PRIOL) THINKSTOCK

Around the world





Denmark

In 1965 a Copenhagen newspaper reported parliament had passed a law that **all dogs be painted white** to improve road safety, because they could be seen clearly at night.



Taiwan

The *Taipei Times* bluffed that Taiwan-China relations were dealt a severe setback yesterday when it was found that the Taipei Zoo's pandas, a gift from Chinese government, were in fact **brown forest bears dyed to resemble pandas**. Among the complaints to the paper, was one from the zoo director.



India

On 1st April 2011, the Chandigarh *Tribune* reported **a UFO landing with aliens at nearby Zirakpur.** It even 'quoted' noted space scientist Yash Pal. The long report ended by subtly revealing the hoax, but innumerable websites and Ufology blogs worldwide picked it up.



Norway

After reading that the **government was planning to distribute more than 10,000 litres of wine** confiscated from smugglers, hundreds of citizens turned up carrying empty bottles and buckets.



Germany

In 2009 BMW ran an ad in UK newspapers promoting a new "**magnetic tow technology**." It enabled drivers to turn off their engine and get a "free ride" by locking onto a car ahead via a magnetic beam.



Canada

In 2008 WestJet Airlines advertised its overhead cabin bins were "among the most spacious of any airline," and it would cost **passengers an extra fee of $12 to sleep in these "sleeper cabins."**



Jordan

Residents fled the desert town of Jahr after a newspaper reported **flying saucers piloted by 3metre-high creatures had landed**.





Australia

On 1st April 1978, a barge appeared in Sydney Harbour towing a giant iceberg. Millionaire Dick Smith had apparently finally **succeeded in his scheme to drag an iceberg from Antarctica** to turn into ice cubes. If only it hadn't rained, washing off the shaving cream and firefighting foam and uncovering the pile of white plastic sheets beneath.

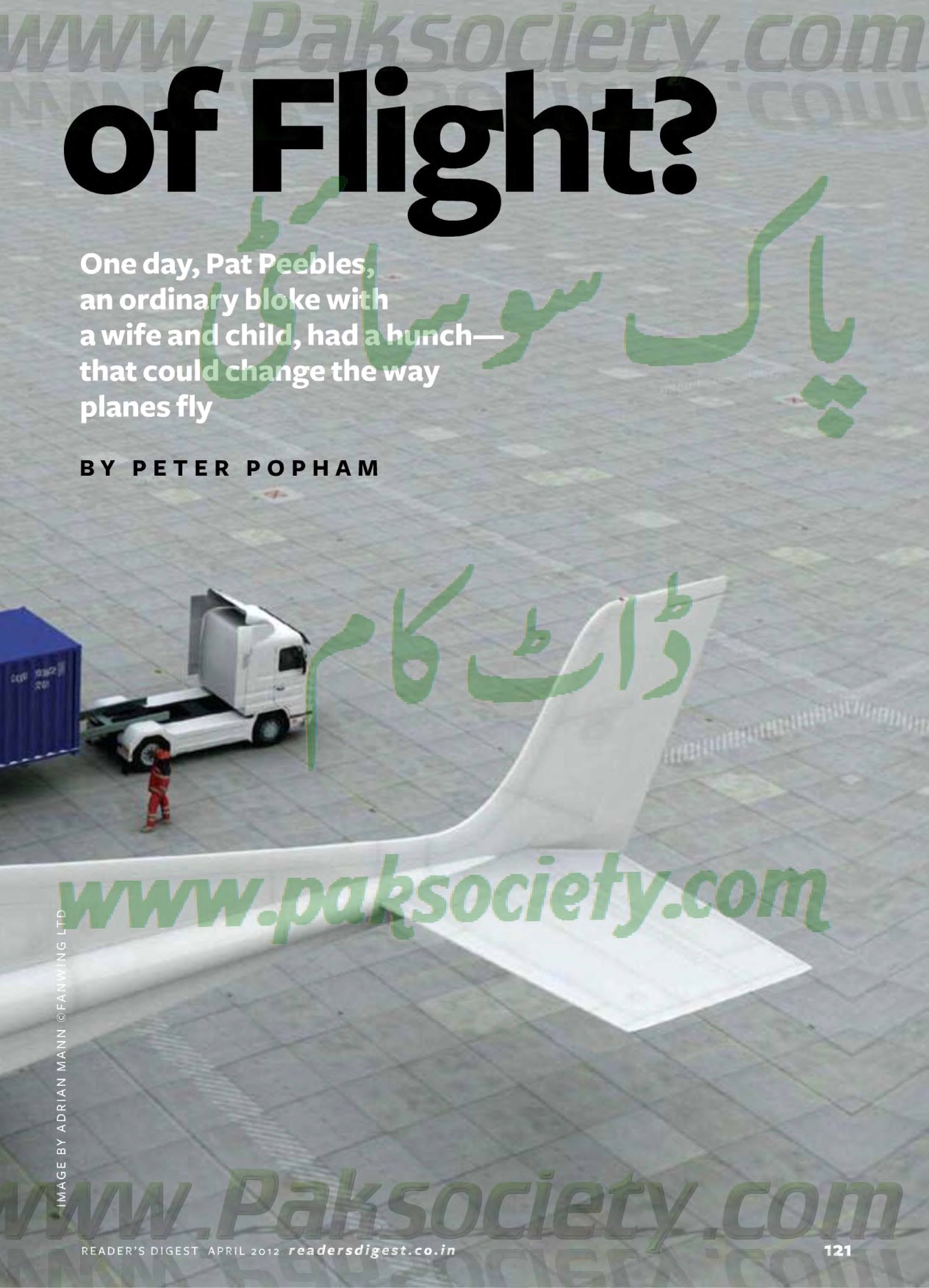
Google Hoaxes

Do a search for "Google Hoaxes" and find out on Wikipedia how they've celebrated every April 1st since the year 2000. Then google the word *anagram* and you will be asked, Do you mean: *nag a ram*? Oh, and as for Mr Alfi Lorpos (an anagram for April fool), who wrote this article—the rest of the year this Digest writer (*right*) is known as Robert Kiener.



The Future

A computer simulation of how the FanWing Cargo Loader would look. It's the plane's wings that provide lift and thrust.



of Flight?

One day, Pat Peebles, an ordinary bloke with a wife and child, had a hunch— that could change the way planes fly

BY PETER POPHAM

IMAGE BY ADRIAN MANN ©FANWING LTD

It's a few years in the future. The economic crisis is finally behind us, and you have just flown from Paris to London's Heathrow airport en route to a well-earned holiday in the Virgin Islands. But when you look more closely at your ticket you realize—oh, God!—your next flight leaves not from Heathrow airport, but Gatwick, nearly 70 kilometres away. And in 90 minutes!

You might squeak it in a taxi, but it will be touch and go. So instead you do the obvious thing: book yourself a seat on the next FanWing shuttle, leaving in five minutes. Climbing on board with 50 others, it crosses your mind that this odd-looking craft—in appearance a cross between a flying truck and a combine harvester—has quietly become part of everyday life.

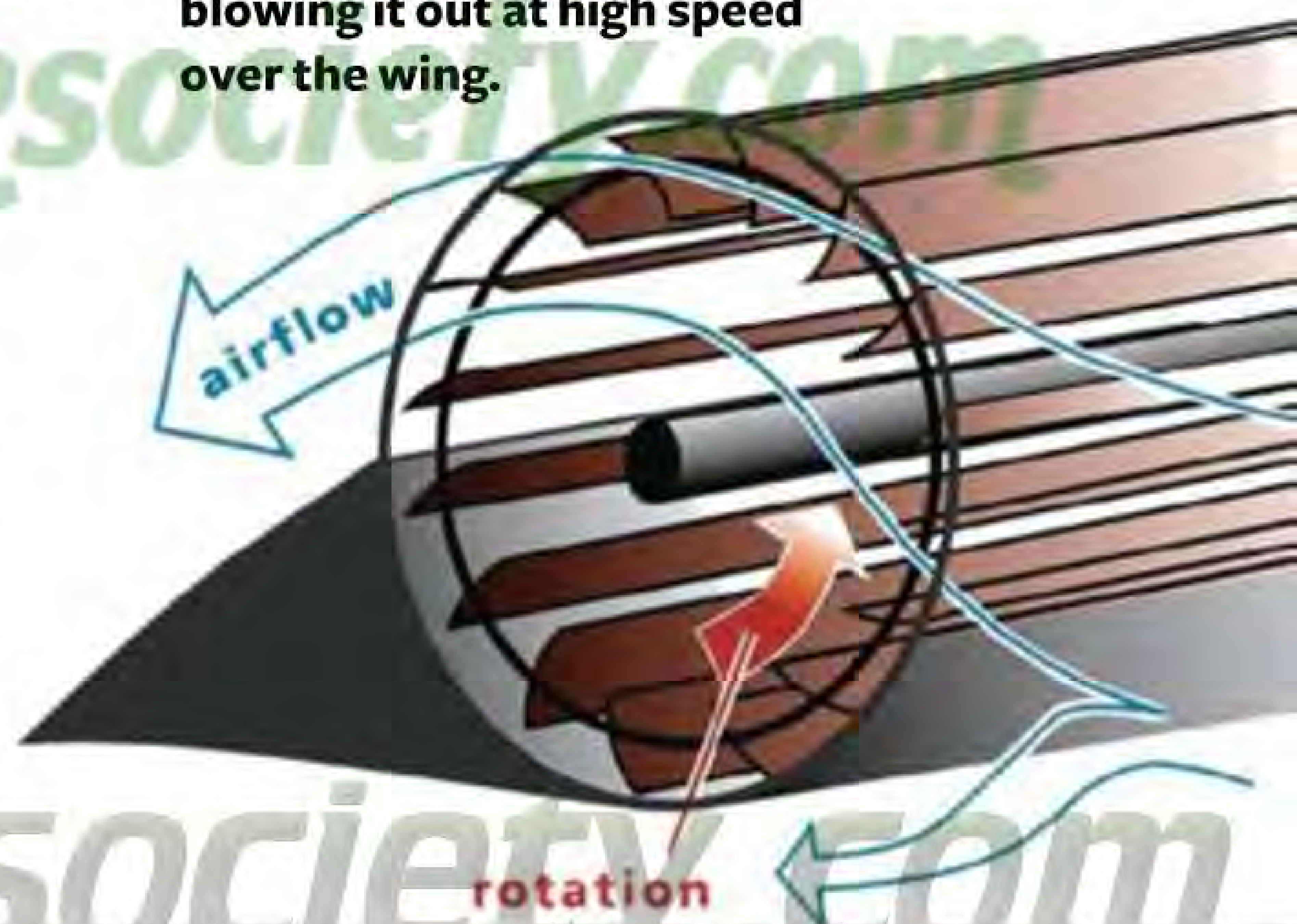
No one would call it elegant: in place of the sleek, slim, swept-back wings of the jet, this craft's wings are stubby, fat and perpendicular to the fuselage, and house a line of cylindrical rotors, not unlike the blades of a harvester. And the principle behind it is completely different from both the traditional propeller planes or the jet: this is brought home to you as FanWing trundles down the runway, then, after just a few metres, takes off, at a far steeper angle than a normal plane.

The FanWing is slower than conventional aircraft, but as well as taking off almost vertically, it can carry immense weight, is immune to stalling and very fuel-efficient. It flies as fast as a helicopter, but is very much quieter—and that's the most important reason why it's your only choice for the quick hop down to Gatwick. The shattering racket made by helicopters has always barred them from scheduled use in situations like this. The whispering engine of the FanWing, and its miserly fuel consumption, have brought air commuting, the stock-in-trade of science fiction for more than a century, within daily reach of the public.

"Part of inventing is being bloody-minded and wanting to do things differently."

The above, of course, is a fantasy, but the airplane it describes is not. The

The FanWing works by sucking air in at the front of the rotors, compressing it as it hits the fan, and then blowing it out at high speed over the wing.



UK's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) put tens of thousands of pounds into its development, and aircraft companies from Wales to New Zealand by way of China have been pondering its possibilities and crunching the numbers for several years. It's under consideration not only as an air taxi, but also as a fire fighter, a crop duster, an unmanned surveillance craft and a freight lifter. Its ability to take off from the shortest runway makes it a natural for use in places like the African or Asian outback where conventional airports are scarce.





Following their dream: Pat Peebles, inventor of the FanWing, and wife Dikla have dedicated their lives to developing the plane.

Yet the FanWing is not the brainchild of aeronautical engineers at Lockheed Martin, the top US defence contractor, or even British Aerospace. It was dreamed up, built, refined and patented by a man with no college education, whose earlier ideas produced a rotating fork for eating pasta, and a flame-powered amplifier (neither of which went into production).

Pat Peebles, 66, an American born in Washington DC and brought up in Rome, where his father worked for the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, is a compulsive inventor. "I was very hard to teach—I did badly at school," he confesses, "I was in a daydream the whole time." He's a proper inventor of the "Eureka!" school.

"Part of inventing," he says, "is trying to improve things, but it's also being bloody-minded and wanting to do things differently, something that has plagued me my whole life. A lot of ideas I've worked on in the past didn't work out very well. But the FanWing actually worked."

Flying and flight in all its aspects have absorbed Pat for years. "I have a passion for flying, and I've done a fair amount of gliding," he says. "This idea—the principle behind the FanWing—hit me a few years ago as a hunch. Although I'm not really a modeller, I built the first model to prove to myself—



and, I hoped, to some other people—that this wing is a viable alternative to the traditional ways of getting off the ground."

Pat first introduced the idea, and his model, in the pages of *Model Airplane News* in June 1998, three years after his first experiments. The mower-like rotors on the wing pull in air at the front and blast it out the back. "The genesis of the idea," Pat says, "was to distribute the propulsion as far as possible over the aircraft. We take that to the extreme, sucking the air through the front over a rather large area, the whole width of the fan. This compresses the air as it comes through the fan, and it gets blown out at very high speed across the wing's trailing edge."

When he had his initial hunch, he says, he had no idea whether it would work or not. He tried many different geometries before arriving at one that kept the frail model in the air. He did the early trials in the car park of his local supermarket in Rome at night, to the embarrassment of his son, "who had to watch this absolute nutcase of a father going into the car park with this ridiculous machine, trying to get it to fly. And, of course, at first it wouldn't."

Finally, trial and error produced a wing geometry that worked. "It didn't go very far the first time," Pat remembers. "It went up, flipped over and crashed. But at least it got off the ground. We'd proved it was possible."

A pilot will soon be able to fly the FanWing Ultralight to show investors how the technology works. The twin tails are a new adjustment that make the plane fly faster.



Pat tests the first vertical-take-off model of the FanWing for "lift."

The working model might well have remained merely a curious one-off toy, like several of his previous inventions. But that would be to reckon without his British wife Dikla. As Pat continued to tinker with the plane, it became increasingly clear to both of them that this time he'd come up with a hell of a hunch. It was not the first attempt to use fans like this for flight, but it was the first that worked.

The next step was to patent it—but that was a major bridge to cross. "We found ourselves facing an enormous bill," says Dikla. "Suddenly we had to come up with £20,000 for the first patents, and we had no money."

"I was ready to quit," says Pat, "because I realized there was no way that I could raise that much money, and I wasn't going to put the family into that much debt." But then Dikla, a writer and teacher with broad experience of project and event management, threw herself into the task. "We took the decision to collaborate," she says, "and call round family and friends and say, we're starting a company, do you want to put in 'X'? The money came in: we got £21,000 a day before the deadline." And in 1999 FanWing, a registered British company, was born.





How the plane will look in flight. Inset: engineer George Seyfang provided vital advice that boosted the plane's stability.

Pat's invention was now protected, but this was only the first step down a very long road. As complete outsiders, with neither qualifications nor track record—Pat had previously worked as everything from a bus driver to a training manager—they had everything to prove in a fiercely competitive industry. David Nicholas, an engineer and naval architect known as "the inventors' guru" until his premature death in 2005, emerged to advise them, helping them obtain a grant from the DTI, which allowed Pat to make major improvements.

But getting the industry to take them seriously remained a major challenge, no matter how well the prototypes performed. "We found ourselves in a catch-22 situation," Pat recalls. "We needed the tests and documentation to prove we were sufficiently credible to gain the financing to provide the tests and documentation." Fund-raising, he says, remained "hair-raising"—and industry grandees were ready with sneering put-downs. At Farnborough in 2008, one renowned aerospace academic, asked to comment, said, "I don't mean to be dismissive, but the principle is so simple anyone could have done it." It was an ignorant and meaningless thing to say. This damaged Pat's credibility.

Then, out of the blue, came vital help.

The expert view is that the FanWing will be flyable in 18 months.

One of the firms to which they had pitched the plane was British Aerospace. George Seyfang, the company's principal concepts engineer at the time, says now, "I was very interested, but there was one big problem: it wouldn't fly very fast." The company turned them down.

But a while later, Seyfang got back in touch: he'd retired in 2005, and FanWing was one of several projects he was now interested in spending his new-found leisure assisting, for free. He put Pat's latest version through the wind tunnel in his garage. "I suggested they change the tail arrangement," he says, "using twin tails instead." It worked: the new version flew considerably faster and was more stable. "We're still looking at a relatively slow plane," Seyfang concedes. "The next thing to look at is the fan—it could do with a bit of optimizing. We'll try that later in the year." By tinkering with the blades—their number, angle, camber and size—he believes they can get the FanWing to perform even better.

Seyfang is also the source of the newest and most exciting twist in the FanWing saga. Pat—who in person displays a wary diffidence that belies his visionary ideas—considered that even with the latest tweaks his baby was still a long way from perfection. Not so George Seyfang. "George has assessed almost any aircraft I've ever heard of," says Dikla, "and he thinks the FanWing is basically ready to go, and will certainly be flyable in 18 months!"

Another of Seyfang's retirement projects was working on the British Greenbird land yacht, which with his help attained a new world speed record of 201 kilometres per hour in March 2009. Now he has brought engineer Richard Jenkins and the British team that developed Greenbird into the FanWing project, with the aim—given funding of around £500,000—of producing a two-person ultra-light version of the plane, to debut at the Oshkosh experimental air show in Wisconsin, USA, in American in July 2013. That would be the next crucial step towards developing the first commercial FanWing: in Seyfang's view a cargo carrier that would offer "helicopter versatility at aircraft prices—almost!"


To see a demonstration of a FanWing model in flight, go to fanwing.com

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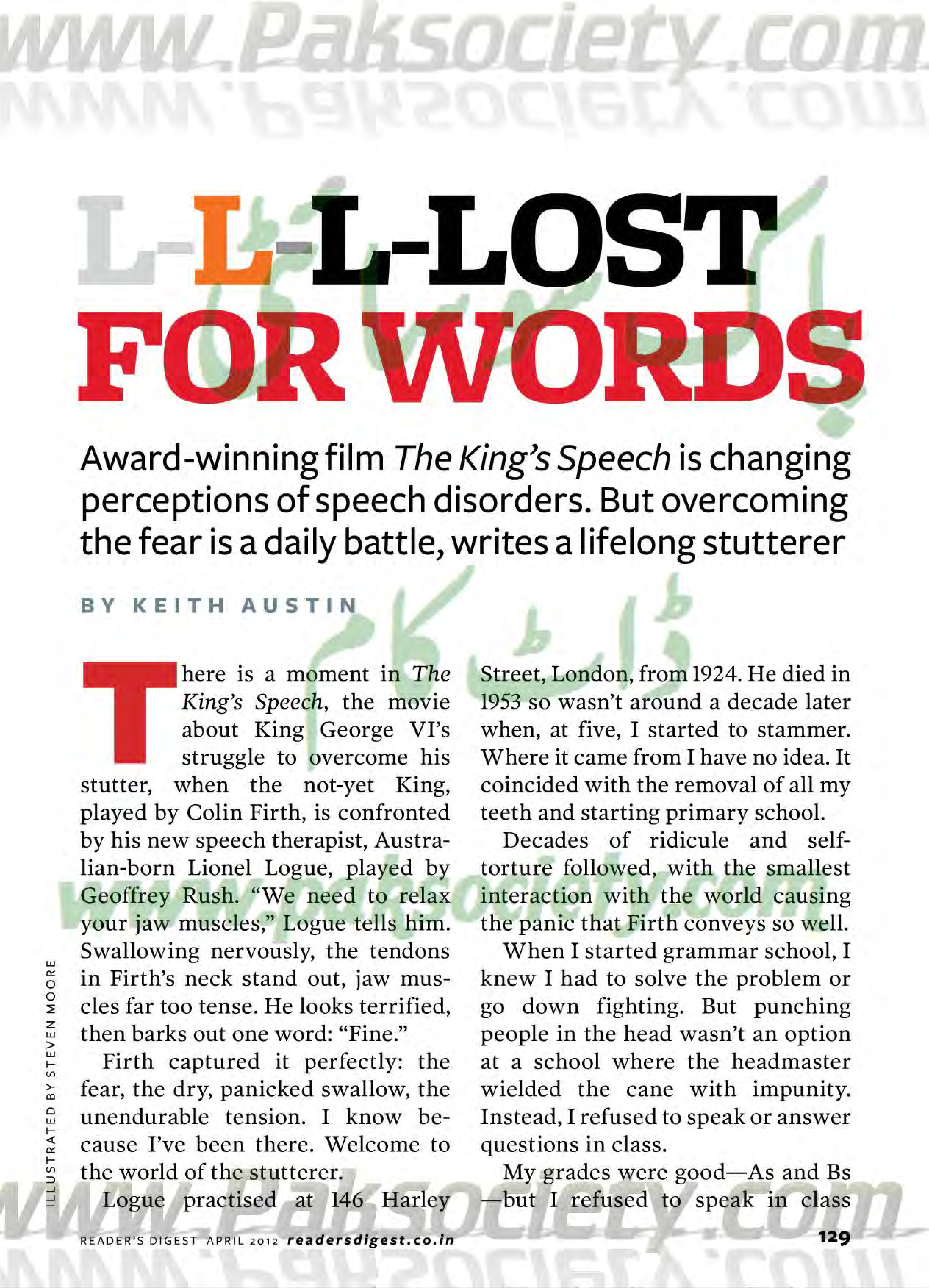
IT MUST HURT

I'd heard that my friend Haripriya's mother was suffering from a chest pain. One day, when I called Haripriya, it was her mother who answered the phone. After exchanging niceties, I asked her, "Aunty, is the pain still there?"

"Yes, she is here," said Aunty before yelling, "Haripriya! Call for you!"

Rinku Goyal, New Delhi


SSS
MOORE



L-L-L-LOST FOR WORDS

Award-winning film *The King's Speech* is changing perceptions of speech disorders. But overcoming the fear is a daily battle, writes a lifelong stutterer

BY KEITH AUSTIN

There is a moment in *The King's Speech*, the movie about King George VI's struggle to overcome his stutter, when the not-yet King, played by Colin Firth, is confronted by his new speech therapist, Australian-born Lionel Logue, played by Geoffrey Rush. "We need to relax your jaw muscles," Logue tells him. Swallowing nervously, the tendons in Firth's neck stand out, jaw muscles far too tense. He looks terrified, then barks out one word: "Fine."

Firth captured it perfectly: the fear, the dry, panicked swallow, the unendurable tension. I know because I've been there. Welcome to the world of the stutterer.

Logue practised at 146 Harley Street, London, from 1924. He died in 1953 so wasn't around a decade later when, at five, I started to stammer. Where it came from I have no idea. It coincided with the removal of all my teeth and starting primary school.

Decades of ridicule and self-torture followed, with the smallest interaction with the world causing the panic that Firth conveys so well.

When I started grammar school, I knew I had to solve the problem or go down fighting. But punching people in the head wasn't an option at a school where the headmaster wielded the cane with impunity. Instead, I refused to speak or answer questions in class.

My grades were good—As and Bs—but I refused to speak in class

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN MOORE

Does Your Child Stutter?

Stammering is most common in pre-school-aged children, and while well over half recover on their own accord, speech therapy has been shown to be the most effective treatment with under-fives, so it is important to seek professional help. A popular treatment that parents can look into is the home-based Lidcombe Programme where parents are trained to give children feedback on their speech. For more information on this, go to *www.stammering.org/lidcombe.html.* A directory of speech therapists in India is available on the Indian Speech and Hearing Association's website at *www.ishaindia.org.in* Lucy Wildman

unless singled out. I suspect there were teachers who never knew there was a panic-stricken boy at the back for whom every class was a heart-thumping hour of terror.

One teacher suggested to my mother that I see a psychiatrist. This achieved nothing; my parents had neither the inclination nor the money to help, and as for seeing a shrink—well, that meant you were mad.

Doing French and German for the school-leaving certificate was torture. Throughout my orals the vague faces of those poor examiners stared at me, trying to make sense of the gargling, stammering, teeth grinding, stiff-tendoned fool standing there.

I would just have to do extra well in the written portions, I reasoned. And I did. It wasn't easy, though, and by the final days at school I'd had enough. I didn't want to go on to university and have it start all over again. I didn't want to work extra hard because my throat, jaw and brain wouldn't play ball. So I gave up and chose to work in the shop I had worked in part time since I was 13. They knew me, they were over the stammer, they accepted it; I could relax.

Then, when I was 20, I got a cadetship at my local newspaper. By this time I had somehow managed to wrestle the stammer under control. Unless tired or stressed, I only had problems with a few words, such as "women" and "seven."

I still don't know how it works; I could say "welcome" or "wormhole" but would get stuck on "women." Same for the "s" sound in "seven"—"sentient" and "sell" were fine, but try getting me to say "seven."

Then I began to word switch. I'd think ahead, visualizing my sentences written on a page before they came out of my mouth. I'd know that a word was coming up that I couldn't say and would switch it to one I could say.

Numbers harboured their own set of problems. Try thinking of another way to say Seven Brides for Seven Brothers.

Imagine, then, my despair at discovering the phone number at my new job was 729-1414. There it was:





***Clockwise from top*: Geoffrey Rush, Helena Bonham Carter and Colin Firth in *The King's Speech*. Keith Austin, a lifelong stutterer, today and as a boy.**

the dreaded "seven." A word I couldn't say without sounding like a snake. How many people remember the phone number of the office they worked in 32 years ago?

Every phonecall to every public relations person, policeman, fireman, councillor, was a nightmare. You know they have to get that information and call you back.

"What's your number?"

"It'sssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss ssssseventwonineonefouronefour." I was like a drowning man gasping for air.

The Latest Research

Two recent studies suggest that the causes of stuttering are more likely to be physiological than psychological. In 2010, the US National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders in Maryland identified three gene variations they believe can cause cell death in the part of the brain that controls muscles, thus blocking the ability to make certain sounds. Researchers at Oxford University compared MRI scans of young stutterers' brains to fluent speakers' and found that the connections in the part of the brain involved in speech production were disrupted in the stutterers. L.W.

Help for Adults

It is useful to work with a speech therapist who will advise on therapies such as slowing down speech (there is overwhelming evidence that people stutter less when speaking slowly) and Vocal Fold Management, which eases tension around the voice box. Electronic devices—which work by relaying the speaker's voice back to an earpiece—can be helpful for some people but can be very costly, so should be tried before purchasing. Edwin Farr, Chair of the European League of Stuttering Associations, urges individuals to view any treatment promising a complete cure with extreme caution. For more information and to locate a self-help group close to you, log on to The Indian Stammering Association's website *www.stammer.in* L.W.

"What?" they'd say, and I'd feel like crying. Which I did one day when, after a particularly sssssibilant episode on the phone, a colleague laughed at me.

Next time, I changed tack.

"My number? Now this might seem a little odd but I have a stutter and one of my problem words is the first number of my phone number.

And that first number is the number after six."

"Sure," came the reply, "I'll ring you back after six; what's your phone number?"

"Oh, look it up," I growled, and slammed the phone down.

I've beaten my stammer into submission. I did it by word-switching and changing the cadences of my speech, which now includes a multitude of hesitations, verbal tics and allied hand movements. Throw all this at someone and they tend to miss the main trick.

It works, but not always, like when I am tired or stressed. I still have problems with "seven" and have to focus my mind and concentrate very hard on it when I "see" it coming up in a sentence.

Last year the Palin Centre in Britain created the Stammering Information Programme, which includes a DVD presented by young people who stutter. The kids, aged 2 to 18, share the horror of being told to hurry up and finish a sentence; their feelings of embarrassment and fear, of being ignored and overlooked in school.

Ten-year-old Samuel Zack might be describing my schooldays when he says: "I can't talk in front of people and it makes me not answer a lot of questions when I know lots of them."

Sadly, due to all the stuttering, the DVD is s-s-s-seven hours long.

You've got to laugh or you'd cry.

Our family was eating supper when we noticed our two-year-old spreading sweet potatoes on his hands. My husband remarked, "Decided to have a yam handwich, did you?" *Charlene Braucht*

My wife and I were going through a rough patch financially, but we kept ourselves sane by repeating, "As long as we have each other, we don't need anything else." But when the television and radio in our bedroom broke within a few days of each other, my wife lost it.

"That's just great!" she shouted. "Now there's no entertainment in our bedroom at all!"

Vincent Day



"So far, I've lost ₹800."

I asked a man on a country road for directions to a friend's house. "Drive straight up the road till you reach the place where the barn burned down," he said. "Make a right turn onto the mud road till you see a shed with a dog out front, and then make another right, and continue up one kilometre."

"What if the dog isn't out front?" I asked.

Perplexed, he said, "Make a right, anyway."

Karen Henry

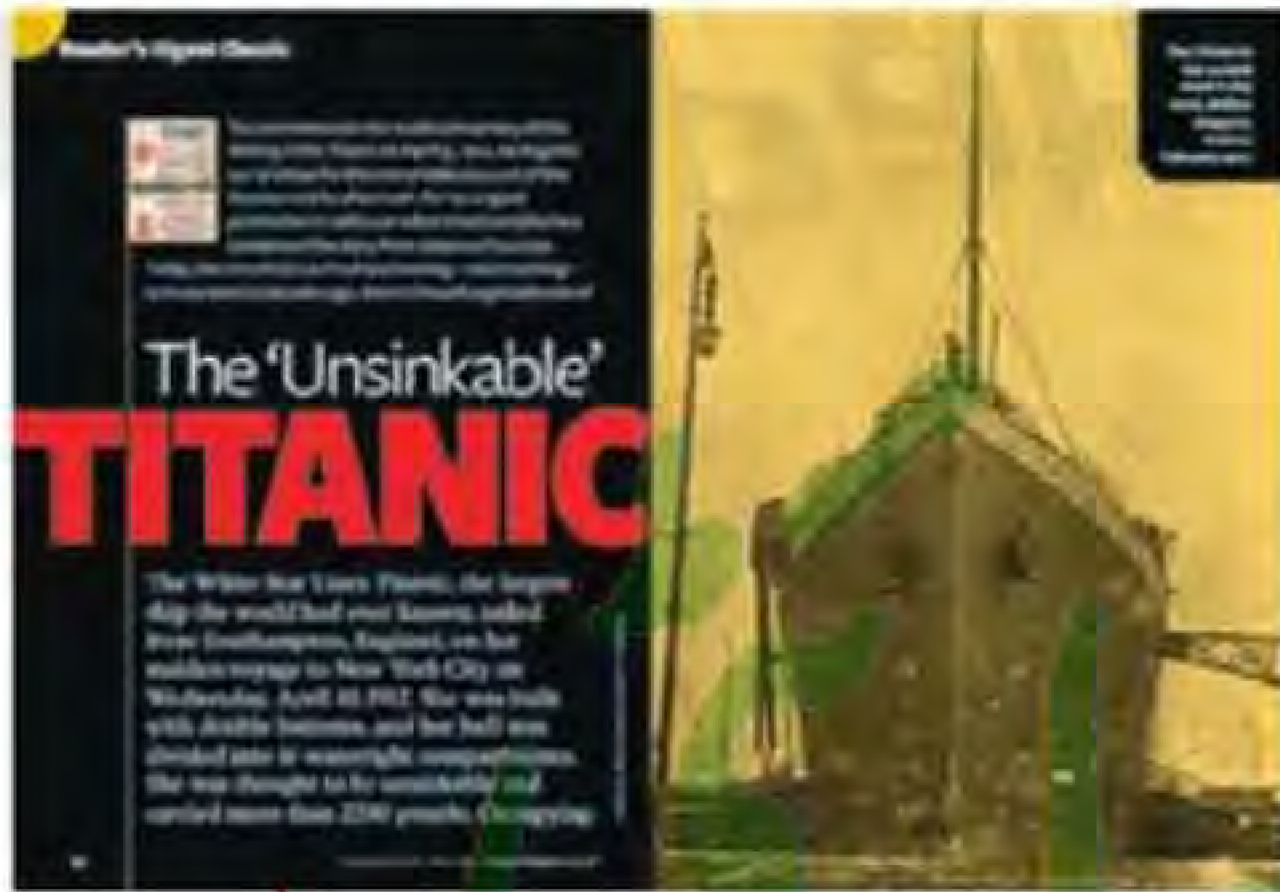
Overheard at my garden-club meeting: "I never knew what compost was until I met my husband."

Mary Haller

I was on the phone talking to my elderly New York aunt, who told me that she bakes a lot. "As for me," I told her, "I pressure-cook most of the time." There was a brief silence, before she advised: "But that is certainly not good, my dear. You must never pressure the cook."

Sudha Khristmukti,
Nadiad, Gujarat

LEN CHAPMAN



Continued from page 63.

I struggled and kicked for all I was worth, it was impossible to get away, for as fast as I pushed myself off, I was irresistibly dragged back, every instant expecting the wire to go, and to find myself shot down into the bowels of the ship. I was still struggling and fighting when suddenly a terrific blast of hot air came up the shaft and blew me right away and up to the surface."

Lightoller survived by joining some 30 others on an overturned collapsible boat before transferring to a lifeboat.

The TITANIC Coat BY DAVID NOONAN

My great uncle Denis O'Brien boarded the *Titanic* as a third-class passenger at Queenstown, Ireland. He was 21, a jockey who was offered a job riding horses for an American family. His older brother Michael, my grandfather, who had made his own trip across the Atlantic a few years earlier, was waiting for him in New York. In one version of the story—different family members recall hearing different details over the years—Michael sent Denis a proper overcoat so he wouldn't look too poor when he came through immigration. That may or may not be true. What we know for sure is that Denis didn't make it, though his overcoat did.

As the ship was sinking, Denis, who is sometimes listed as Timothy O'Brien in *Titanic* passenger records, wrote a note to Michael. He gave the note and his overcoat to a woman in a lifeboat and asked her to see that his brother got them. She did. A photo of my grandfather wearing what we have always called "the *Titanic* coat" holds a special place in the family archives. In the picture, he looks small and dapper and not poor at all.

No one knows what the note said—that part of the story got lost over the course of the past hundred years—and I often wonder what few words Denis chose that night. I also wonder what he was thinking later, as he stood on that tilting deck with no coat and faced the end of his too-short life in that cold ocean, beneath those cold stars.



Michael O'Brien in the coat that survived.

Passenger Lawrence Beesley described the great ship's last moments as seen from Boat No. 7, a kilometre and a half away: "We gazed awestruck as she tilted slowly up, revolving apparently about a centre of gravity just astern of amidships, until she attained a vertically upright position; and there she remained—motionless!"

In the maelstrom of ropes, deck chairs, planking, and wildly swirling water, nobody knew what happened to most of the people. From the boats, they could be seen clinging like swarms of bees to deckhouses, winches, and ventilators. The famous and the unknown tumbled together in a writhing heap as the bow plunged deeper and the stern rose higher. Then a steady roar thundered across the water as everything movable broke loose—29 boilers ... 15,000 bottles of ale and stout beer ... 30 cases of golf clubs and tennis racquets ... huge anchor chains ... tonnes of coal ... 30,000 fresh eggs ... five grand pianos.

The structure supporting the first funnel collapsed. The mammoth smokestack seemed to lift off like a missile—its steel hawsers tearing the planking out of the decks—before it toppled on the people in the water.

The ship's innards were now giving way. Crushed between the pressure of the sea and the gargantuan tonnage of the foundering liner, the celebrated watertight bulkheads crumpled with "big booms." The *Titanic*'s stern steadily lifted, and suddenly her lights snapped off. They came on again with a searing flash and then went out forever.

Two minutes passed, the noise stopped, and the *Titanic* settled back slightly at the stern. Then slowly she began sliding under at a steep slant. As she glided down, the ship seemed to pick up speed. When the sea closed over the flagstaff on her stern, there was a gulp.

"She's gone; that's the last of her," someone sighed to lookout Reginald Lee in Boat 13.

The starlight revealed a scene of utter horror. The sea all around was covered with a mass of tangled wreckage and the struggling forms of many hundreds of men, women, and children—slowly, inexorably freezing to death in ice-cold water. A sheet of thin, grey vapour hung like a pall a few metres above the surface.

COURTESY MARGARET O'CARROLL FEIGLE

Burial at Sea

Meanwhile, the *Carpathia* was making its way towards the *Titanic*. "Icebergs loomed up and fell astern," wrote *Carpathia*'s Captain

Rostron. "We never slackened, though sometimes we altered course to avoid them. As soon as there was a chance that we were in view, we started sending up rockets at intervals of about a quarter of an hour.

"There was no sign of the *Titanic* herself. By now—it was about 3:35am—we were almost up to the position. I saw a green light just ahead of us, low down. I knew that must be a boat. I brought the vessel alongside, and the passengers started climbing aboard. They were in the charge of an officer. I asked that he should come to me as soon as he was on board."

Without preliminaries, Rostron burst out excitedly, "Where is the *Titanic*?"

"Gone!" replied Fourth Officer Joseph G. Boxhall. "She sank at 2:20am."

"Were many people left on board when she sank?"

"Hundreds! Perhaps a thousand or more!" Boxhall's voice broke with emotion. "My God, sir, they've gone down with her!"

"Daylight was just setting in," Rostron wrote, "and what a sight that new day revealed. Everywhere were icebergs. And amid the tragic splendour of them as they lay in the first shafts of the rising sun, boats of the lost ship floated."

At 8:30, the last of the lifeboats and the collapsibles to arrive made fast and began to unload.

The *Californian* (which all night long had failed to react to the *Titanic*'s distress) had got under way at 6am, steering for the position where she had earlier been informed the *Titanic* had sent out her distress call. Shortly after 8am, steaming cautiously through the ice, she was near enough to the *Carpathia* for semaphore signal-

TITANIC Watch

The 100th anniversary brings a wide array of remembrances:

- James Cameron's blockbuster *Titanic* movie comes out in a new 3-D version on April 6. (We may need extra popcorn to counter seasickness.)
- *Shadow of the Titanic: The Extraordinary Stories of Those Who Survived* by Andrew Wilson (Atria, April 14) reveals the aftermath of the shipwreck for survivors such as Madeleine Astor and White Star Line chairman J. Bruce Ismay, as well as lesser-known people, including brothers who'd been abducted by their father.
- *Titanic Tragedy* by John Maxtone-Graham (Norton, March 19) is a detailed reinvestigation of every component of the tragedy.
- The recently released *Titanic in Photographs* by Daniel Klistorner, Steve Hall, and others (The History Press) offers a wealth of rare images—one of which is reprinted here—of the singularly sumptuous but sinkable boat.

Dawn Raffel

ling. The *Californian* inquired what had happened; the reply came that the *Titanic* had sunk. Later the *Californian* received a wireless message from Captain Rostron: "I am taking the survivors to New York. Please stay in the vicinity and pick up any bodies."

Before heading back, Rostron sent for the Reverend Anderson, a clergyman aboard, and the people from the *Titanic* and *Carpathia* assembled in the main lounge to pay their respects to the dead. While they murmured their prayers, the *Carpathia* steamed slowly over the *Titanic*'s grave. There were few traces of the great ship. And at 8:50, Rostron felt sure there couldn't possibly be another survivor. He rang "full speed ahead" and turned his ship for New York.

Before the *Titanic's* lights went out for good, its lamps flooded the water with a green radiance.

According to the captain of the *Californian*, no bodies could be found, and after an hour or so he resumed his voyage. There were in fact hundreds of corpses, drifting to and fro on the face of the waters. They may not have been seen because they were caught up in an immense ice mass moving in a northeasterly direction, and ships dared not venture near it. Later, those bodies were dispersed, possibly as a result of the ice breaking up in the Gulf Stream.

A week after the sinking, the cable ship *MacKay-Bennett* found 306 of them. When first sighted, they had seemed like a great flock of gulls on the water, bobbing gently in the swell. They were all floating in an upright position as if treading water, most of them in a great cluster surrounded by debris from the ship.

All day, crewmen worked at dragging the sodden bodies onto the deck. Those victims without identification were prepared for a proper burial at sea. By 8pm that Sunday, the first burials began. *MacKay-Bennett* engineer Fred Hamilton kept a diary:

"The tolling of the bell summoned all hands to the forecastle, where 30 bodies are to be committed to the deep, each carefully weighted and sewed in canvas. The crescent moon is shedding a faint light on us as the ship lies wallowing in the great rollers. The funeral service is conducted by the Reverend Canon Hind; for nearly an hour the words 'For as much as it hath pleased ... we therefore commit his body to the deep' are repeated, and at each interval comes, splash! as the weighted body plunges into the sea, there to sink to a depth of about two miles [three kilometres].

"Splash, splash, splash."

Final Resting Place

"Like an enormous black finger pointing at the sky," as one survivor described her, the *Titanic* had heaved herself upright at 2:18am. She hovered "in this amazing attitude" for moments—some said for several minutes—and took a sudden plunge forward as everything from dynamos to cabin furniture broke loose and fell towards the bow. Then she corkscrewed slightly to port; her submerged forecastle began to shudder, and the ocean surged into A and B decks. Before the *Titanic*'s lights went out for good, she appeared "like an enormous glowworm"—even the lamps in the underwater sections of the ship continued to burn, flooding the water around the bow with a green radiance.

Then she settled back to an angle of about 70 degrees and began slowly sliding into the sea. Muffled thunder sounded deep beneath the surface, and "she went down with an awful grating, like a boat running off a shingly beach." She disappeared from view at 2:20am. Within 15 seconds, the *Titanic* was 15 metres under the surface and accelerating.

There was desperate life, still, among the more than 1000 souls remaining aboard. But only the few that somehow got to the surface had more than a moment's hope. After another several seconds, the *Titanic* passed through the 30-metre level.

Somewhat deeper, there were implosions as the heavy steel bulkheads crumpled like tinfoil. The remaining buoyancy of the ship was sharply reduced. Her speed picked up to perhaps 20 knots.

A few minutes after total submersion, the inclination of the *Titanic* relented a bit from the steep angle at which she had slipped beneath the pond-smooth surface. Her giant boilers, which had crashed down through all the ship's bulkheads and punched holes in the side of the bow, had gone on ahead, advance scouts seeking the ocean floor.

Levelled out in a flatter angle, the great ship now "kited" as it made its way through the icy depths, oscillating back and forth as she descended, somewhat in the manner of a leaf floating to earth.

Around 1000 metres, she entered a zone never penetrated by sunlight. At that depth, where the ocean bears down at 114 kilos per square centimetre, no human life is possible. The stern, which had endured unimaginable stress when it rose towards the sky, had already pulled away. More cargo broke loose—cranes, the engine-room telegraph, chamber pots, serving platters, bottles of claret and

champagne from the ship's wine cellar near the stern. Then, at about 2400 metres, the *Titanic* thrust her bow into the benthic current, a vast, subsurface, slow-moving river.

The ship had been sinking for seven minutes now, and the ocean floor was still several hundred metres below. She entered a hilly landscape of river valleys, tributary streams, and outcroppings.

Her stern had been floating free of the forward section and had partially disintegrated, scattering derricks, propellers, and even personal effects from the crew's quarters. Bursting open, too, were the individual refrigerators, aft on G Deck, to disgorge their contents: fish, vegetables, ice cream, beef, poultry, cheese, fruit, and flowers.

Finally the *Titanic* slammed down. It will never be known which of the two sections, bow or stern, hit the brownish seafloor first. They kicked up huge clouds of sediment, which mingled with great clods of the ship's boiler coal. The bow section came to rest on its keel, with only a slight list to port. The stern, some 300 metres away, disintegrated further upon impact. Unseen, the sediment drifted down as a ghostly snow.

Now the fractured hulk would be a permanent tomb for the mighty and the lowly; for the ship's captain and most of his crew, for musicians, clergymen, and millionaires, and for teachers, bricklayers, carpenters, nurses, farmers, dishwashers. There, at about 4000 metres, people from some 20 nations lay in 3-degree C water under a pressure of 448 kilos per square centimetre.

The time was close to 2:30am, Monday, April 15, 1912. The *Titanic*'s maiden voyage had lasted four days, 17 hours, and 30 minutes.

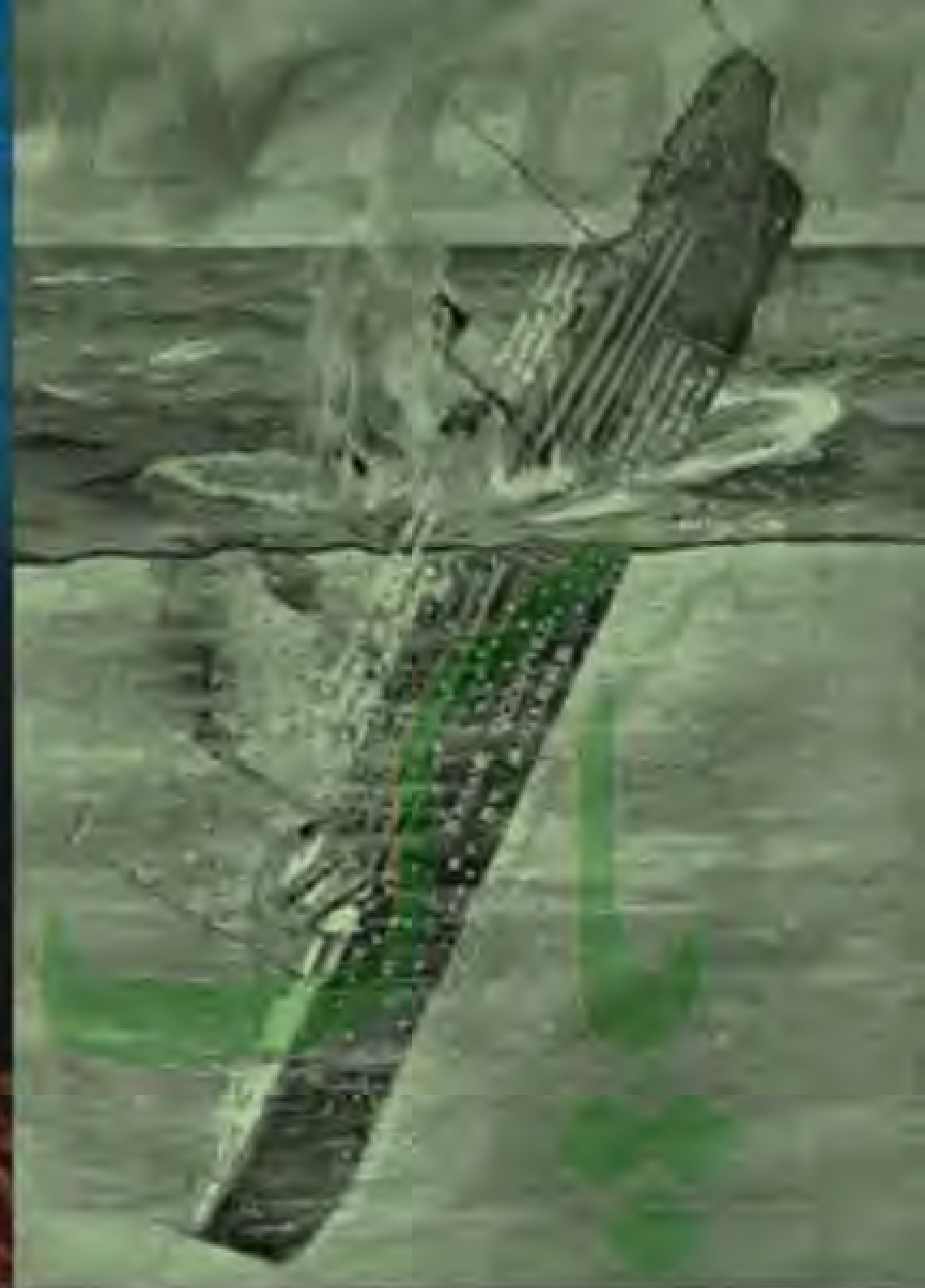
The Search Begins

Parallel investigations, the first by the US Senate, the second by the British Board of Trade, probed into the tragedy of the *Titanic*. Both agreed that the great ship had ignored repeated warnings and steamed at full speed through a sea of deadly ice. There was a "ram-you-damn-you" philosophy in those days among all the steamship lines. They wanted to deliver "express train" service, holding exactly to schedule even if it meant going full tilt through fog banks, ice fields, or fleets of fishing vessels. The *Titanic* paid the price for this folly.

After the investigations were ended, save for an occasional memoir, little was added to the tragic account of the *Titanic*. Yet the story still stirred in the psyche of the world. To this day, invoking the name of the *Titanic* has an emotional value greater than all but a handful

In September 1985, underwater explorer Robert Ballard found the *Titanic* at a depth of 3600 metres off the coast of Newfoundland. He took a series of haunting pictures. *Far right:* a depiction of the ship's descent.





of history's most extraordinary events.

Then, in 1963, the first of a series of deepwater disasters fostered the development of equipment and techniques that would finally make it possible to find the *Titanic*.

The first was that of the nuclear submarine USS *Thresher*, which sank 354 kilometres off Cape Cod on the morning of April 10, 1963. *Atlantis II*, a US research vessel from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, attempted to take pictures of the *Thresher*. A 226-kilo camera with strobe lights was lowered by more than 2400 metres over "protuberances" located by the US Navy. It was, said Woods Hole's former head of geophysics, J.B. Hersey, like dropping "a ping-pong ball into a beer can from the top of the Empire State Building while blindfolded and during a [massive storm like a] northeaster."

Nevertheless, photos were obtained showing crumpled sheet metal, torn lengths of electrical cable, even an open book. The Navy's deep-diving bathyscaphe *Trieste* later dived to the ocean bottom and, using a device similar to a mechanical arm, retrieved identifiable debris from the *Thresher*.

Five years later, a Russian Golf II-class submarine sank northwest of Hawaii. It was located through the use of sensitive detection equipment—hydrophones, sophisticated cameras, side-scan sonar, magnetometers. A high-security US government-sponsored project later developed retrieval techniques, including a clawlike device called Clementine on the end of a five-kilometre-long "pipestring" that was used to bring part of the sub to the surface.

One scientist interested in finding the *Titanic* was Robert D.

Ballard, a marine geologist at Woods Hole. In 1971, Ballard proposed using Alcoa's Seaprobe—a camera sledge lowered on lengths of drill pipe—to locate and photograph the wreck. Ballard would then descend in the submersible *Alvin*, which was certified to go to the *Titanic*'s depth. But no financial backing could be found for the proposal. Then, in 1980, a Texas oilman geologist, Jack Grimm, announced he would finance an expedition.

At Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory, William Ryan, an oceanographer, read in the newspaper about Grimm's project and was intrigued by its scientific possibilities. He offered Grimm help and proposed using deep-tow, side-scan sonar to find the ship. He also suggested that the man who pioneered its development for deep-ocean surveying, Fred Spiess of Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California, could be of great help. Grimm accepted Ryan's offer.

It would not be easy. The *Titanic*'s resting place, Ryan said, "is in one of the largest known areas of natural magnetic disturbance in the North Atlantic." The *Titanic* sank near what is now known as the J-Anomaly Ridge, a 110-million-year-old volcanic feature of high magnetism.

Between July 31 and August 16, 1980, some 1300 square kilometres of North Atlantic ocean bottom were mapped by Grimm's chartered vessel, *H.J.W. Fay*, and its long-range, side-scan sonar. At least three good acoustic targets were detected that matched the size of the *Titanic*, but fate dealt a severe blow to the expedition when a storm came up and tore off the vital magnetometer. Spiess put together another one out of a shampoo bottle and some wire from a discarded exciter belonging to the ship's generator. But the weather got worse, supplies and fuel ran low, and the *Fay* headed into Boston.

Grimm confidently promised that a 1981 expedition would return with photographs of the sunken wreck. The searchers did obtain a photo of a propeller-like object, but it could not be positively identified. And a 1983 expedition was compelled by gale-force winds to abandon the mission.

Despite these failures, Robert Ballard remained optimistic. "I always thought that finding the *Titanic* was not the hardest part of the puzzle," he said. "Filming it in an appealing way would be the hardest part."

The violent gales of the North Atlantic soon put his confidence to the test.

Financier Jack Grimm promised that a 1981 expedition would return with photos of the sunken wreck.

Mud or Bones?

In Robert Ballard, there is something of the astronaut, Jules Verne, and transcontinental explorers Lewis and Clark wrapped into one. Tall and athletic, already well-known as a skilled diver and deep-sea explorer, he "watched from the sidelines" with mixed emotions as the Grimm expeditions continued. "Their effects convinced me that the key to discovering the *Titanic* lay in having sufficient time on target to conduct a thorough search of an area of 250 to 400 square kilometres."

Thus Ballard turned to "an old friend—France," in order to gain more time at sea searching for the elusive wreck. He was soon to join forces with Jean Jarry and Jean-Louis Michel of the French ocean-exploration organization IFREMER (Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer). "These were men of the deep, men I knew and greatly respected." Michel and Ballard had first teamed up in 1973 on a research expedition to the mid-Atlantic ridge, a large underwater mountain range.

For Ballard, IFREMER, and the US Navy, the *Titanic* was essentially a target to test prototype underwater vehicles that would give humans a "telepresence" on the ocean floor. *Telepresence*, a word coined by Ballard, means using video technology to project one's mind to the seafloor without physically descending to it.

Trim and wiry, a veteran of the French navy's submarine exploration squad, Jean-Louis Michel initiated a thorough study of all the logbooks and nautical records bearing on the *Titanic*'s sinking. "Based on these historical data," Michel explained, "we drew on our charts the probable area where the *Titanic* should be, somewhere inside a square that was 20 kilometres on a side. By June of 1985, we were ready to go."

Ballard and Michel were uncertain about the clarity of the water at the site of the wreck. "You have terrific bottom currents running along this area stirring things up," explained Ballard. "We were concerned that our cameras would be of little use in an area of very poor visibility."

They had closely researched a severe 1929 earthquake, which shook the whole Grand Banks area off Newfoundland where the *Titanic* sank. A huge landslide raced as fast as 55 kilometres per hour down the slope from the continental shelf to the abyssal plain hundreds of metres below. "One of our questions," Ballard said, "was whether this landslide had affected the wreck." They wondered if their images

would show "acres of mud or, if lucky, the bones of the *Titanic*."

Michel and his team left Brest, France, aboard the French research vessel *Le Suroit* on July 1, 1985. "We got to the *Titanic*'s area eight days later. On July 11, we began 'mowing the lawn.' That's the term used for the meticulous sweeping back and forth with the imaging and listening equipment to cover every square metre of the search area."

At the end of thousands of metres of cable, *Le Suroit* towed a "train" of sensing devices. First came a five-metre-long acoustical-system vehicle, nicknamed *Poisson* ["Fish"] by the French. It contained side-scan and vertical sonar units. Then came a long cable trailing a magnetometer to detect anomalies. "With side-scan sonar," Ballard explained, "you are searching for the main wreckage, which will show up as a large radar blip on the sonar. At the same time, the magnetometer tells you if what you are looking at is metallic."

"It took us nearly two hours to get the whole apparatus into position," Michel explained. "And every time we had to pull it in, it took another two. Strong currents forced us to retrieve *Poisson* after every 'mowing,' and then go back to the starting point and lower it again."

Compounding the problem was the deteriorating weather, which developed into a 36-hour-long gale. When the search was resumed, Michel recalled, "We had searched an area three times the size of Paris, and we had christened the towed acoustical system successfully. Still, we were very disappointed."

The last day assisting *Le Suroit* was August 7, and as she prepared to sail to the French island of St-Pierre off the coast of Newfoundland, Michel and Ballard saw a rainbow to the south. It seemed an omen of good luck.

"That's It!"

On August 13, Ballard and Michel rendezvoused in the Azores archipelago, in the North Atlantic Ocean, with the 75-metre, 2100-tonne Woods Hole research vessel *Knorr*, and two days later set sail for the *Titanic* search area 3860 kilometres away.

The co-chief scientists were now in reversed roles, Ballard heading up the search while Michel acted as head of the noon-to-4pm, midnight-to-4am watch. "Because it is the most demanding physically, you always put your best crew on the 12-to-4 shift," Ballard said, and that was the slot assigned to Michel in the small "control van" erected on the starboard side of the aft deck.

The search area contained three different types of terrain: a

canyon with many tributaries; a sand-dune area not unlike the Sahara; and part of a large mudslide, the possible aftermath of the 1929 earthquake. "We made an assumption," Ballard said, "based on all the evidence at hand, that the wreck would be a 'plume' of debris about a kilometre and a half long, and that it would be oriented basically north and south." So instead of "mowing the lawn," they established a search grid of east-west lines—and by sending down a video camera, they improved chances of identifying small debris.

Two new deep-sea probes, *Argo* and *Angus*, were used in the search. The more critical was *Argo*, a sledge-like submersible the size of a car. *Argo* was equipped with sonar, powerful strobe lights, and sophisticated video equipment. Like the French acoustical system, *Argo* was pulled by a steel-jacketed cable with a breaking strength of 13,600 kilos that carried power down to the submersible and data back up to the surface ship.

As the days went by, hope for finding the wreck waned. A routine of keeping eyes glued to the video monitors settled in. Ears listened to rock and country music, and mouths bulged with buttered popcorn. August was slipping away, and the "weather window" was about to slam shut.

On the night of August 31 to September 1, Jean-Louis Michel came on duty in the control van for the 12-to-4am watch. Michel took his position at the ship-driving console. With him were six others on the graveyard watch including the navigator, the video operator, and the sonar expert. Ballard went to his quarters for the night.

As the *Knorr* was moving cautiously over its course, the unblinking eye of *Argo* began to record pieces of debris. Gray images of coal and lengths of metal piping slid across the video screen. *This could be it*, Michel thought, his excitement mounting. "We watched for five minutes as other fragments came into view. Then, suddenly, there was the unmistakable image of one of those giant boilers!"

While people stared at the image, an air of intense surprise and wonder permeated the control van. "Somebody should wake up Bob Ballard," Michel said. But nobody wanted to leave. It was too emotional a moment.

Just minutes later, at about one in the morning, cook John Bartolomei knocked at Ballard's door, stuck his head in the cabin, and reported, "The guys think you should come down."

Ballard hurried to the control centre, stepping into the soothing red light of the large room for his first look at the video image of the boilers on the monitors. "That's it!" he exclaimed.

As word of the discovery spread throughout the ship, the control van filled with excited crew members and scientists. Amid the jubilation, Ballard later recalled that "the human side hit us. It was so close to the time the disaster occurred—the *Titanic* sank at 2:20am—that it seemed appropriate to make a gesture. It was spontaneous. I just said that some of us wanted to have a moment of silence. If others wanted to join us for a brief ceremony, they could.

"I don't remember how many came. We were very quiet. All I could think was that those many lives had been lost needlessly. If only there had been enough lifeboats. If only the *Californian*'s radio operator had been awakened. To finally put those souls to rest was a very nice feeling."

A Warmth of Remembrance

With time running short, Ballard and Michel flew *Argo* gingerly around the wreck some 4000 metres below the heaving seas.

More pictures emerged on the *Argo*'s video screen: part of the *Titanic*'s bridge, a gaping hole where the forward smokestack once stood, empty davits. Later, the prow appeared with its foremast, and anchor chains looking like they'd turned to stone. Watching these pictures, Ballard felt "like an archeologist opening a Pharaoh's tomb."

"Flying over the hull," Ballard added, "was like walking on egg shells." It was determined that the forward mast had toppled, but at one point *Argo* flew so close to the *Titanic* that it bounced off the base of one of the stack mounts, picking up a small smear of paint on its steel frame.

Ballard decided to approach the ship from the stern, but, to his surprise, he could not find it. Had it broken off somewhere beyond No. 2 stack? He lowered *Angus*, a still-camera submersible, to get close-up, high-quality 35-mm colour photographs. Developed later, they showed the bow section covered with "a thin dusting of sediment, like a gentle snowstorm." Etched indelibly into the mind were images of wine bottles, cut-glass windows, a mattress frame, the ship's telegraph, the crow's nest. But no poop deck, no stern.

The *Knorr*, which had been allotted only one month for this expedition, was now scheduled to return to Woods Hole. On the trip back, Ballard and Michel discovered that they had seen the stern after all—in pieces. A review of the film images disclosed that it was contained in a debris plume extending more than 1500 metres behind the wreck.

Captain Richard Bowen of the *Knorr* later wrote about the voyage home: "On the four days' transit, the airwaves, which are normally filled with merchant-ship traffic, would become oddly quiet as other ships held their traffic and listened to ours. On ships around the world, officers and seamen must have said, 'Somebody finally found the *Titanic*.'

"Four generations of mariners have grown up hearing of the *Titanic*, and now the mystery of her location is finally solved."

For Ballard and Michel, the great ship lying over three kilometres below them lived for a moment, again, as she had those seven decades before: sleek and eager to dash across the Atlantic Ocean, her seven bright rows of portholes and windows exuding golden light. She symbolized an age of ease and graciousness, of pride and confidence in the powers of man. Now, as an avid press broadcast the news received from the *Knorr*, the world seemed to reminisce, to mourn, to feel an ache in the heart and a warmth of remembrance for those brave victims who perished on that great ship so long ago.

SOURCES: HANSON W. BALDWIN, *HARPER'S MAGAZINE*, 1934; *A NIGHT TO REMEMBER*, BY WALTER LORD (HENRY HOLT & CO.); *THE TITANIC—END OF A DREAM*, BY WYN CRAIG WADE (PENGUIN); *BEYOND REACH: THE SEARCH FOR THE TITANIC*, BY WILLIAM HOFFMAN (BEAUFORT BOOKS, 1982); HAROLD BRIDE, *NEW YORK TIMES*, 1912; *TITANIC AND OTHER SHIPS*, BY CHARLES H. LIGHTOLLER (OXFORD CITY PRESS); *THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TITANIC*, BY ARCHIBALD GRACIE (M. KENNERLEY, 1913); *THE MAIDEN VOYAGE*, BY GEOFFREY MARCUS (VIKING); *HOME FROM THE SEA*, BY SIR ARTHUR H. ROSTRON (MACMILLAN); *THE LOSS OF THE TITANIC*, BY LAWRENCE BEESLEY (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN); *THE CALIFORNIAN AND THE TITANIC*, BY PETER PADFIELD (1965); *A MATTER OF RISK*, BY ROY D. VARNER AND WAYNE R. COLLIER (RANDOM HOUSE, INC.); ROD REDMAN, *SEA CLASSICS* MAGAZINE, 1985; MARK POTTS, *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, 1980; KATHLEEN MAXA, *WASHINGTON POST*, 1981; JOHN NOBLE WILFORD, *NEW YORK TIMES*, 1980; PAUL R. RYAN AND ANNE RABUSHKA, *OCEANUS* MAGAZINE, 1985; ROBERT D. BALLARD AND JEAN-LOUIS MICHEL, NOVEMBER 1985; STEFI WEISBURD, *SCIENCE NEWS*, 1985; CHRIS DAVIS, *POPULAR MECHANICS*, 1985; AUDREY C. WOODS, ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1985; *RAISE THE TITANIC*, BY CLIVE CUSSLER (VIKING).

THE MUGS DON'T WORK

Police in Oxfordshire, UK, apologized to parents after warning them of the dangers of a non-existent drug.

An officer received a hoax e-mail describing how new "strawberry methamphetamine" had been flavoured to appeal to children—and forwarded it to several schools, whose teachers duly sent letters to parents and held special assemblies. But all concerned were left embarrassed when it emerged that US online pranksters had invented the narcotic some months earlier.

The incident echoed a 1990s spoof news programme Brass Eye, where comedian Chris Morris fooled David Amess, a Conservative MP, into believing that a drug called "cake" was sweeping the nation. So taken in was Amess by the harrowing details of the drug's effects, including causing one youth to "cry all the water out of his body," that he asked a Parliamentary question about it.

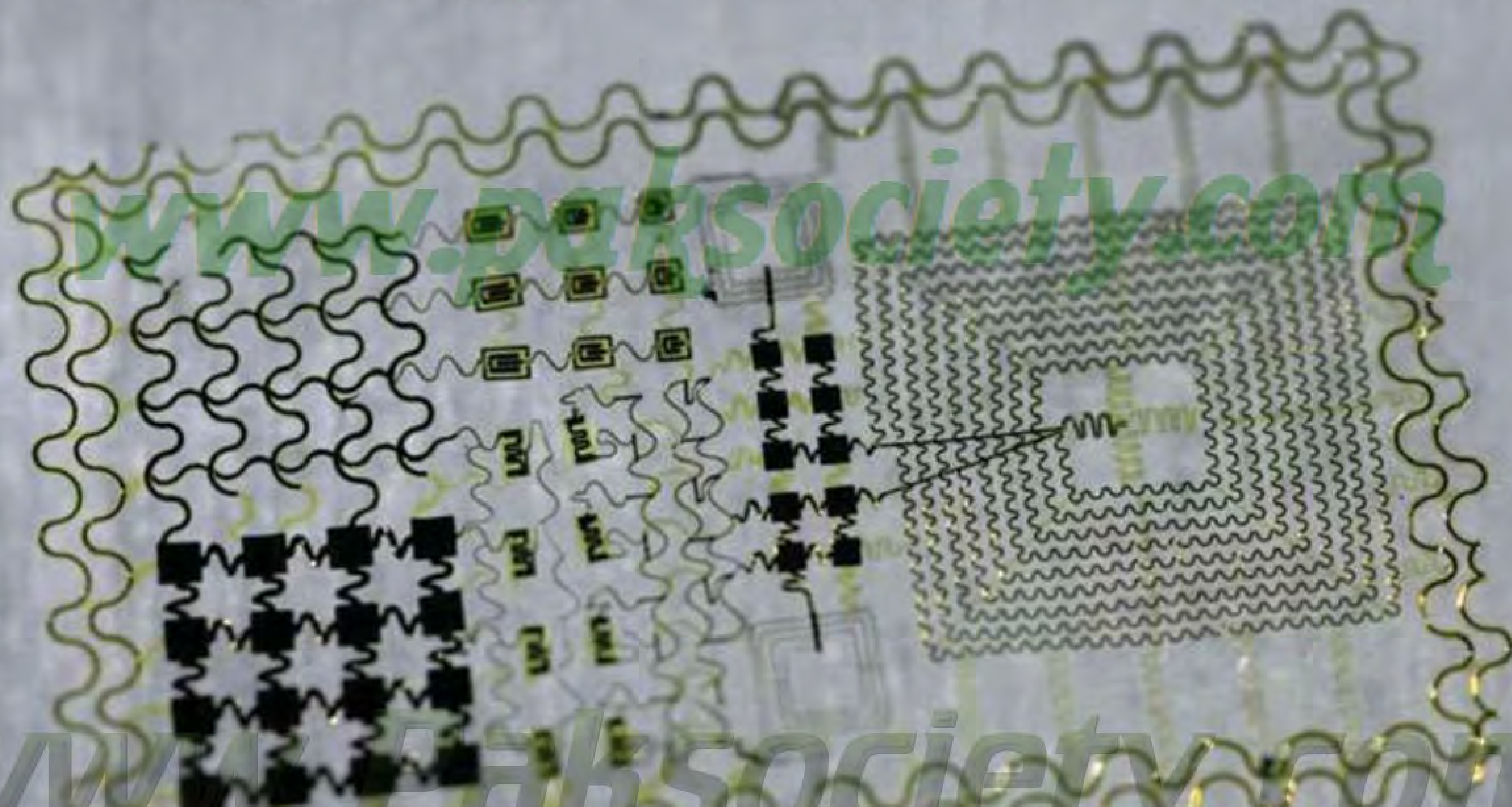
Medical Tattoos

Once reserved for sailors and rock stars, tattoos have become so mainstream, you may soon be seeing them in hospitals. Scientists at the University of Illinois, at Urbana-Champaign, USA, have created high-tech temporary tattoos that can measure heartbeats, brainwaves and muscle activity with the goal of transmitting the information wirelessly to health-care practitioners. The key breakthrough is the development of ultra-thin flexible microchips that cling to the skin so naturally that they feel invisible, says lead researcher John Rogers.

Premature babies will be among the first beneficiaries once the technology is approved, Rogers says, since they are often too small for the bulky electrodes and wires currently needed to monitor their vital signs. The tattoos will also allow for less intrusive monitoring of sleeping patients. The team is currently fine-tuning prototypes to enable fully wireless data transmission.

Though the project is exciting, the long-term goal is grander: "It's really to blur the distinction between man-made electronics and the body," Rogers says. "We think that's the future." *Alex Hutchinson*

J. ROGERS/UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



News From the World of Medicine

ENGLAND

Wireless Heart Help



The first-ever wireless pacemaker helps keep the heart beating steadily without many of the complications of traditional pacemakers. The wire-free system, developed in Cambridge, England, and in California, **allows surgeons to place tiny electrodes on the heart's surface** instead of threading wires through veins and to the heart's chambers. When the heart beats abnormally, a small box implanted near the heart sends a pulse of energy to the electrodes to get it back on track. Following tests in Europe, the Wireless Cardiac Stimulation system (WiCS) will be submitted to the [US] Food and Drug Administration for review.



ITALY

High-Tech Crossing Guard



If you can't break the dangerous habit of walking while texting, the new smartphone app WalkSafe may help keep you out of harm's way. Developed by University of Bologna in Italy and Dartmouth College, USA, the free app (available for Android and, soon, the iPhone) **enables a phone's camera to detect a vehicle approaching from about 50 metres away** when the phone is in use. The phone vibrates and beeps to warn you before you step into a vehicle's path.

UNITED STATES

A Lasik Alternative



Implantable contact lenses from California-based STAAR Surgical may be the next big thing for near-sighted people who don't qualify for LASIK, which uses lasers to permanently reshape the cornea. During a short surgery, a doctor inserts the Visian Implantable Collamer Lens (ICL) through three tiny incisions in the cornea—a procedure far less invasive than LASIK. The ICL **covers the eye's natural lens and, like LASIK, can often lead to better than 20/20 vision overnight.** The ICL procedure now costs more than LASIK, but it can be a solution for some people.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Getting Rid of Household Odours

Odours at home can wreck your living. If it stinks, there's a source that you need to tackle. By all means, use your nose to locate that first—it may be soiled clothes, food, the pet, the toilet, a carpet. Then have it cleaned, open the windows and use an odour-neutralizing spray.

It's also good to know about some everyday things around the home that can help you fight odours:

- **Vinegar** To eliminate unpleasant kitchen odours, mix half a cup of white vinegar in a cup of water. Let it boil on the stove until the liquid evaporates. You'll be breathing easier in no time.

After cleaning up your pet's soiled spots, mop the area with equal parts white vinegar and warm water. Dry with a cloth or paper towel. (On a wood or vinyl floor, test a few drops of vinegar in an inconspicuous area to make sure it won't harm the finish.) For carpets, rugs, and upholstery, thoroughly blot the area with a towel. Then pour some undiluted vinegar over the spot. Blot it with a towel, then reapply the vinegar and let it air-dry.

- **Baking soda** Scour wooden chopping boards with a paste of baking soda and lemon juice.

Place small perforated boxes containing baking soda in the fridge to absorb food odours.

To deodorize the microwave, mix two tablespoons baking soda and one-cup water in a large microwave-safe bowl. Add lemon wedges to the mixture for a fresh scent. Run the microwave on high for three minutes.

- **Matches** Lighting a matchstick and holding it up for a few seconds in the toilet after use immediately eliminates any bad odour.
- **Bleach** Pour half-cup bleaching powder and half-cup water down drains to prevent unwanted odours.
- **Activated charcoal** Fill small containers with activated charcoal and keep in areas affected by mould and mildew—wooden drawers or rarely used cabinets, for instance.

Adapted from *rd.com*



DRBIMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Buying a Laptop?

Don't be talked into features you'll never use. Listen to our experts!

THE CHERRY ON THE TOP:
SSD (Solid State Disk), the super-fast silent disk drive!

1. Display?
If you carry it around a lot, a 13.3-inch will do (although this usually is more expensive than the larger one). If you use it mainly as a home PC, you should select at least a 15.6-inch one, with resolution of 1366 x 768.

2. Casing?
Instead of plastic, go if possible for the magnesium alloy chassis, making a portable machine weigh about 1.5 kilos.

3. Battery life?
With heavy usage (for example YouTube through wireless), it should be good for three hours on a single charge (these days even five to six hours can be available).



4. Processor?
Its speed should be a minimum of 2 GHz; dual processors have an edge.

5. Memory?
Buy more than 2 or 3 GB only if you'll want to edit photos or videos. The traditional 32-bit operating systems cannot process more than that anyway.

6. Hard drive?
Aim for minimum 500 GB capacity, plus a 7200 rpm disk drive.

7. Videocard?
Opt for the discrete rather than the integrated video card; performance should enable perfect presentation of HD-quality videos.

8. Keyboard?
Choose the popular, so-called island (or chiclet) variation—buttons set apart from one another—with a big Enter key, plus a comfortable-size, properly sensitive trackpad below.

9. Sound system?
A stereo audio system with subwoofers isn't expensive to add. Get one with a USB input.

BONUS TIP

Get a heat-shield, non-slip, laptop pillow.

ILLUSTRATED BY ANDRÁS BARANYAI

¡Challenge!





Alphabet soup

Insert the vowels A, E, I, O and U once each into the words below to complete them.

1. HSMD

2. QTN

3. PHR

4. SQ

Triangle trial

Arrange six matchsticks to construct exactly four triangles.

Picture perfect

Dominoes can be arranged into square "picture frames" as shown in this example:



Can you arrange the eight dominoes below into two square frames made of four pieces each, so that every side of each frame has a value of nine?

Solutions on page 48.



THINKSTOCK

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Grooms

Pune based parents invite proposals for good-looking 29-year-old, 5'10", Kokanastha Brahmin, B.E, MBA from the UK, wealthy family.

Good-looking 24-year-old, 5'10", cosmopolitan, living in Sagar (MP), MBA from a premier institute, successful entrepreneur, well-to-do family.

Proposals are invited for handsome 34-year-old, 5'10", 96 Kuli Maratha, living in Mumbai, chartered accountant, financially well-off.

Alliance invited for Lucknow based 26-year-old, 5'10", Brahmin, M.Tech from a premier institute, successful business, wealthy family.

Accomplished 27-year-old, 6', Lingayath, living in Aurangabad, MBA from Bentley University, USA, renowned and wealthy business family.

Proposals are invited for 29-year-old, 5'10", Brahmin, living in Pune, BE, MBA from a premier institute in the UK, financially well-off.

Brides

Fair and beautiful 25-year-old, 5'4", Punjabi Arora, living in Mumbai, successful dentist, wealthy industrialist family.

Proposals are invited for 27-year-old, 5'3", Sikh, living in New Delhi, postgraduate from RIT, USA, well-established and wealthy family.

Slim, fair and beautiful 24-year-old, 5'2", Brahmin, living in Lucknow, MBA, working with a leading Gurgaon based MNC, well-to-do family.

Proposals are invited for good - looking 29-year-old, 5'3", Sunni Muslim, living in Mumbai, postgraduate from Canada, financially well-off.

Alliance invited for highly qualified Kolkata based cosmopolitan Bengali, 29-year-old, 5'6"; pursuing PhD (Bio-Stats) in the U.S. Father is a retired doctor.

Proposals are invited for 24-year-old, 5'4", living in Hyderabad, pursuing MBA from a premier institute, wealthy Telugu Brahmin family.

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"COLOUR CITY" (FROM THE *ARCHITECTURAL CITYSCAPES* SERIES) BY SURESH GULAGE
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 91.44 X 61 CM, 2010



Suresh Gulage finds his muse in buildings which "may be mute spectators, but hold the life of a city." What intrigues him is the play of light on buildings. Here, the Pune-based artist draws from the architectural elements of his city's old residential areas, called *vaadas*, and the main market, the *mandai*. Gulage, 29, is an alumnus of Pune's Abhinav Kala Mahavidyalaya.

WHAT FLAVOUR WOULD YOU LIKE TODAY?

Give Monday a Ginger flavoured Nudge

Because Monday is the get-back-to-work day. Because Monday is the day you don't want to get back to work. Because Monday is cruel, difficult and comatose. Give Monday a nudge with delicious Ginger flavoured Taj Mahal tea.







Sweeten up Tuesday with Cardamom

Tuesday. The second day. The day that sets the trend for your week. Make it sweet, make your week special. Get refreshed with the fragrant sweetness of cardamom in Taj Mahal tea. The rest of the day will find you honey-tongued and purposeful.

Give Wednesday the nice kind of Lemon

Wednesday tends to be melancholy. The week stretches ahead. Wednesday needs optimism. Give Wednesday a shot in the arm with tangy-sweet Lemon flavoured Taj Mahal tea. And you'll notice Friday is not so far away.





Discipline Thursday the Earl Grey way

Thursday is too close to Friday to be serious. Thursday needs purpose. Give it a dose of old English discipline with a light cup of Earl Grey flavoured Taj Mahal tea.



Friday needs a Darjeeling vacation

Treat Friday. Because you love Friday anyway. Allow Friday the luxury of the much coveted Darjeeling blend of Taj Mahal tea.





Slow down Saturday with English Breakfast

Saturday lounges in bed, takes it easy and lets you be. Saturday goes best with a slow, lazy cup of English Breakfast tea from Taj Mahal.





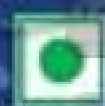
De-bore Sunday with Masala



Don't waste away Sunday. Conquer it, tame it and do things with it. Read, walk, garden, talk and spew uncontrollable energy. Suppress Sunday-lethargy and give it some spunk with Masala flavoured Taj Mahal tea.

O&M 7504

Wah Taj!



TAJ MAHAL BRINGS YOU SEVEN UNIQUE AND DELICIOUS FLAVOURS OF TEA TO INDULGE IN AND MAKE EVERY DAY SPECIAL.

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